

**Third Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## Bill 21—The Labour Mobility Act

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Allan), that Bill 21, The Labour Mobility Act; Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Swan:** This bill will allow certified workers from other Canadian jurisdictions to practise their occupations in Manitoba in accordance with chapter 7, Labour Mobility of the Agreement on Internal Trade. In particular, it requires Manitoba regulators to comply with chapter 7 when workers who are certified for an occupation in another jurisdiction apply to obtain Manitoba certification for that occupation.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 20—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act (Electricity Reliability)**

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act (Electricity Reliability), now be read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce this bill which formally recognizes Manitoba's participation in North American-wide system of electricity reliability standards. This bill provides for the adoption and enforcement of mandatory reliability standards and for the planning, design and operation of Manitoba's electricity generation and transmission facilities that are part of the integrated electricity grid with other provinces and the United States.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

## PETITIONS

## Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Sharon Friesen, Karen Wowk, Lisa Banman and many, many others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

## Seven Oaks Hospital—Emergency Services

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The current Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP government are reducing emergency services at the Seven Oaks Hospital.

On October 6, 1995, the NDP introduced a matter of urgent public importance that stated that "the ordinary business of the House to be set aside to

discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the threat to the health-care system posed by this government's plans to limit emergency services in the city of Winnipeg community hospitals."

On December 6, 1995, when the then-PC government suggested it was going to reduce emergency services at the Seven Oaks Hospital, the NDP leader then asked Premier Gary Filmon to "reverse the horrible decisions of his government and his Minister of Health and reopen our community-based emergency wards."

The NDP gave Manitobans the impression that they supported Seven Oaks Hospital having full emergency services seven days a week, 24 hours a day

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier of Manitoba consider how important it is to have the Seven Oaks Hospital provide full emergency services seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

This is signed by D. Ziprick, D. Ziprick, A. Makara and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Ring Dike Road—Ste. Rose du Lac**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Ring Dike Road is a well-used gravel road that is used as a secondary road in and out of the community of Ste. Rose du Lac.

Given the heavy pattern of use, there is strong interest in the community in seeing the Ring Dike Road upgraded to a paved provincial road.

It would be most cost-effective to upgrade the Ring Dike Road to a provincial road at the same time that upgrades are being undertaken at the junction of Highway 68 and Highway 5.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to consider upgrading the Ring Dike Road at Ste. Rose du Lac into a provincial road; and

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider upgrading the Ring Dike Road at the same time that work is being done at the junction of Highway 68 and Highway 5.

This petition is signed by Marcel Vandepoele, Darcy Malcolm, John Cabak and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Traffic Signal Installation—PTH 15 and Highway 206**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) stated that traffic volumes at the intersection of PTH 15 and Highway 206 in Dugald exceeded those needed to warrant the installation of traffic signals.

Every school day, up to a thousand students travel through this intersection in Dugald where the lack of traffic signals puts their safety at risk.

Thousands of vehicles travel daily through this intersection in Dugald where the lack of traffic signals puts at risk the safety of these citizens.

In 2008, there was a 300 percent increase in accidents at this intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate installation of traffic signals at the intersection of PTH 15 and Highway 206 in Dugald.

To request that the Minister of Transportation recognize the value of the lives and well-being of the students and citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by Mary Jean Campbell, Cathy McKay, John Devisser and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, the 2009-2010 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade.

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to

table the 2009-2010 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation.

\* (13:40)

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Holocaust Memorial Day

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement for the House.

Today, on April 21, we join with people all over the world to observe Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day.

I'm proud to say on May 1, 2000, Manitoba's Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Bill 19, The Holocaust Memorial Day Act.

This day is dedicated to the memory of the six million Jewish people and the millions of other victims who were murdered in Nazi death camps during World War II.

Though the Holocaust took place decades ago on another continent, the names that appear on the monument here on the legislative grounds are evidence of the direct, vital connection that all Manitobans have to this atrocity. There are Holocaust survivors living in our province. Thousands of Manitobans are relatives of Holocaust victims, and, today, on Yom Hashoah, we remember them and renew our commitment to vigilance against this kind of human rights tragedy.

Yom Hashoah keeps us aware of the past inhumanity and injustices that the world has witnessed and also gives us the opportunity to discuss the progress we have made in the human rights arena, as well as the challenges that lie before us. As colleagues and members of an international community, we must continue to work together to ensure that this tragic history is never repeated.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members observe a moment of silence in memory of those who suffered and died in the Holocaust. Thank you.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I thank the minister for the statement, and we concur with the request for a moment of silence to mark this important day in history.

Also, our thanks to the Premier (Mr. Doer) for the proclamation today read out on the grounds of the Legislative Building on behalf of members of

this Assembly, reminding all Manitobans and Canadians of the need to be vigilant in standing up to extreme ideologies that seek to destroy lives in the way that lives were destroyed only 65 years ago in Europe. Mr. Speaker, some six million Jewish people, who lost their lives in the most horrific of circumstances, and many others as a result of an extreme ideology that was allowed to go unchecked for too long.

As recently as yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we heard the comments of an Iranian leader, Ahmadinejad, at the UN commenting on the issue of the Holocaust and implying that it did not occur and that the right of the State of Israel to exist is something that ought not be recognized.

When we see these sorts of comments being made in such a forum, we are reminded that the threat that had existed continues to be with us. We certainly support the decision of Prime Minister Harper, as well as the Obama administration, to not participate in a forum that would contribute to and provide a platform for those who express such views and commend those diplomats who courageously protested those comments yesterday.

So we stand with all Manitobans up against these sorts of extreme ideologies and remind ourselves of the need to be vigilant each and every day.

We support the request for a moment of silence. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, today, we remember the awful events of the Holocaust, and it's a time to renew our commitment to preventing such human rights tragedies, to preventing and standing up to speak out against any acts of genocide wherever they may happen. We must be vigilant; we must be forceful.

Mr. Speaker, I have been fortunate enough to visit the holocaust museum, the one in Jerusalem and the one in Washington, D.C., and I was deeply moved. We must remember and we must be ready to stand up. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise for a moment of silence.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### **Provincial Ice Jams and Flooding**

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, our water levels are gradually declining in the Red River Valley. The Red River watershed is saturated at this time so river levels could change quickly if significant rainfall were to develop in upcoming weeks.

The Red River level at James Avenue in Winnipeg this morning was 20.60 feet, a decline of 0.23 feet from yesterday morning. Flood levels in the Pembina Valley are declining. The levels of the Souris River, however, are beginning to rise rapidly. There is extensive overland flooding that is continuing in the Interlake region, with many roads overtopped or washed out.

Today, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) and I toured the R.M.s of Ritchot and Morris, stopping in the communities of St. Adolphe and Rosenort. We continue to monitor the floodway. We're committed to working with municipalities and individuals affected through disaster financial assistance.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I would like to thank the minister for the flood update today. We are quite aware of the levels of the Souris River continuing to rise. Another place that we are hearing quite a few reports out of is overland flooding in the Interlake. I know in some areas the levels have started to go down a little bit.

I want to really pay tribute to all the people that worked so hard in those areas to protect properties and protect people from even more serious damage. It's going to take a little more commitment and a little more work before this whole incident of flooding is over, and I know those people have worked tremendously to improve conditions. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave? [*Agreed*]

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his update on the situation and share concerns about the situation on the Souris River valley. It is of particular concern the situation in Peguis and the

flooding and the damage to houses that have occurred there and of considerable concern that there does not appear to have been adequate warning at the height of the flood and the level that it reached. Clearly, this is something that will need to be looked at in more detail and be better prepared for in the future.

\* (13:50)

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Provincial Debt Increase**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, over the course of the decade of rising revenue that began in 1998, this government increased the debt of the province of Manitoba to a record level. Today it stands at some \$22 billion, which represents a debt of \$20,000 for every single person in the province, or \$80,000 for a family of four.

I want to ask the Premier: Now that we are into an era of declining revenue, does he feel that it was fair to future generations to increase the burden of debt here in Manitoba while others use the good times to pay down their debt?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** The member opposite is also including in the number the Hydro debt. I would point out when he was chief of staff the debt equity in Hydro was 86 percent. The books did not include the purchase of the Centra Gas company by the former government, something that we had to put on the books. We also had to put on the books all the pension liability that was forgotten and swept underneath the table. That has been recognized. That's why we've had four credit upgrades, because the finances, Mr. Speaker, are completely above board.

So, Mr. Speaker, we could go on. We've reduced taxes by over a billion dollars through the last 10 years. The corporate tax was 17 percent under the Conservatives. They feigned a lot of interest in taxes. They did nothing, highest in the country; it's now down to 12. They feigned a lot of interest in small business. The small-business tax was 9 percent; it's now down to 1 percent and going down to zero, the first province in Canada to do that.

We have conformed with the Filmon balanced budget legislation every year, according to the Auditor General, and, of course, we have also implemented the recommendations of the Auditor

General on balanced budgets through GAAP financial accounting, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** As a result of the hard work of previous governments to balance the budget in difficult circumstances, to deal with cuts in transfer payments and to set the groundwork for a growing economy which started in 1998, Mr. Speaker, we had a decade of growth in Manitoba, a decade which they squandered. It was an opportunity to pay down debt. Instead of paying it down, they increased the debt so that now we are in a position, as revenues decline, where we have more debt in Manitoba than the provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia combined, here in Manitoba.

Does the Premier think that it is sustainable to have increased our debt to the point where we have more debt than Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. combined, now that we're going into an era of declining revenue?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the facts he alleges are wrong, point No. 1. That doesn't surprise me. I would recall that three years ago he said there'd be no money left in the rainy day fund in 2009. He was wrong then. Last year he said that we would be beaten by provinces west of us for an inland port. He was wrong then. He said we wouldn't have an internal trade agreement because Québec wouldn't agree to it. He was wrong then.

He was wrong then; he's wrong now, and he'll be wrong tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the way this government has gone out to borrow during good times in order to cover up for its financial mismanagement is something that not even we could have predicted, their creativity at borrowing in order to create the false impression of a healthy financial picture, something that we will confess we weren't able to anticipate, their creativity in fudging the books.

On that topic they have claimed, Mr. Speaker, a net debt of \$11 billion by using \$10 billion in phony deductions when the real number is \$22 billion in debt.

Why are they hiding the true debt picture from Manitobans? Is it because, Mr. Speaker, they know that if Manitobans knew the true debt picture, Manitobans would not support this path of unsustainability entered onto by this government?

**Mr. Doer:** The Scotiabank talks about a very, very prolonged period of good governance in the sense of balancing the books and preparing for rainy days. It's helped them a lot—that was the assessment of the Scotiabank. TD Economics said the same thing. CIBC World Markets said the same thing. BMO Capital Markets: a rare show of balance; continued to be a long-term approach to reducing debt equity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Province—something that members opposite never dealt with—will continue to tackle its pension liability. I would point out—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We're early into question period. Let's have some decorum here, please.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** In 1997, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General could not attest to the Conservative books. It didn't make a front-page story. It should have been. In 1998, the Auditor General, again, put a note on the financial statement.

The Auditor General of Manitoba has verified our balanced budget under the Filmon balanced budget legislation for eight years, and we will have, again, a balanced budget under GAAP, which includes pension liability.

The Auditor General is who the people of Manitoba should listen to, not partisan politics from members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

### **Provincial Debt Repayment Reductions**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, not only does the Minister of Finance have a love affair with debt, but he wants more. Now he wants to contravene his own legislation, Bill 38, to reduce debt repayments from \$110 million per year to \$20 million per year. This, by itself, is totally wrong, but what is really wrong is he already shows this change in the 2009-2010 budget.

He does not have the legislative authority to do this. Why is he prepared to contravene his own legislation to, in fact, break his own law?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member understands fully that a budget is presented to the Legislature, debated, passed, and, in this case, we have put in the budget things that never existed before: full employer contributions to the civil servants' and teachers'

pension fund, \$135 million, never done before; full amortization of all the assets that we purchase on behalf of the people of Manitoba, another \$135 million—it wasn't done before under the previous government—and, in addition, a \$20-million down payment on the general purpose debt.

When you put those together, that's \$290 million versus the puny \$75 million the members opposite put down on liabilities and debt when they were in office, and they buried the pension liability under the table and off the books.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, section 13(2) of Bill 38 speaks very specifically to the fact that there has to be an amount of \$110, 495,000 that has to go to pay down the debt. That's in the legislation.

I go back to my original question, and that is the legislation that this minister brought to this House and passed in Bill 38. Why is he breaking his law? Why can he not put the \$110 million back in the debt repayment like he was supposed to and not a puny \$20 million to pay off debt?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member would have us go back to the '95-96 balanced budget legislation that was condemned within two years by the Auditor General, and for years they said, the members opposite—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We have rules in the House and members that have the floor have the right to be heard. You don't have to agree with them, but they have the right to be heard. Let's have some decorum, I ask once again. I'm not going to ask too many times, because it's getting really out of hand. Let's have some decorum here.

The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I have an announcement for the members opposite. Margaret Thatcher has retired. Mike Harris is no longer in government. George Bush is finished. The world has moved on since the days when they were actually reducing the wealth of Manitobans. The world has moved on since the days when they could buy—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) and the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I'm asking for your co-operation, and if I don't get it, there will be

consequences because this is getting totally out of hand. I'm getting a lot of complaints from the public and we're supposed to be setting an example. We need some decorum here.

**Mr. Selinger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I simply put on the record that we are now following the full GAAP treatment for recording the budget. It includes everything for the first time in the last couple of years, in history. It includes all the Crown corporations. It includes the public schools. It includes the universities. It includes all the special operating agencies.

All of these things are included on the bottom line, as required by the Auditor General of Manitoba. They have the ability, under our legislation, to tell us whether or not we've balanced the budget, and every year we've been in office we have balanced the budget under the legislative regime that we've been following, including theirs, including the new one recommended by the Auditor General.

All the protestations of the members opposite are really an attempt to undermine their own requirement that the Auditor General attest to the soundness of our books. We've attested to it. The Auditor General has agreed with us. Only the members opposite—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Borotsik:** I take it, Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister didn't quite understand the question. This wasn't about the balanced budget itself, which is not so balanced; it was about the legislation that they passed under not-so-balanced budget legislation and the requirement to retire debt. We now have over \$21 billion in debt in the province of Manitoba. If they keep paying it off or not paying it off, Manitobans will take 550 years to pay off the debt based on \$20 million.

Mr. Speaker, does this minister have a plan to retire debt or is he just simply going to acquire more debt and let the cards fall where they may and let Manitobans pick up the taxes?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, Mr. Speaker, the member has completely ignored the pension liability which was \$3 billion growing to \$8 billion. We now have a plan in place to deal with the pension liability and to make sure it doesn't grow to that level. The members did not have an amortization schedule for capital assets that we acquired. We now have that in place and it's put on the books every year. We also have



made over 900-plus million dollars of investments in reducing pension liabilities and general purpose debt.

In the budget, it's very clear from the years 2004 until 2008-09 that the debt went down on a net basis every single year. Now, the members are in denial about that. The members are in denial that the appropriate measure for debt is net debt. You take your obligations minus your liquid cash and you put your net debt on—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### **University of Manitoba Pension Performance Report**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** The University of Manitoba pension plan has seen a dramatic decrease in value. Investment performance in the plan has been reported to be worse than anyone has ever seen.

I ask the Minister of Advanced Education: Over the past year, how much has the university pension plan declined in value?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** I thank the member for a question. Of course, it isn't really a question on Advanced Education; it is a question on pensions at the University of Manitoba.

My information is that the pension will be re-evaluated in December 2009, and at that time we'll be in a position to discuss it more intelligently.

**Mr. Hawranik:** A very simple question: How much has it declined in value? It's a very simple question. I want a simple answer to that question.

It's been stated, Mr. Speaker, that with respect to the university pension plan, there's a gap between the amount of money that's available in the plan and the amount of money needed to continue to meet the obligations of the plan, to meet those pension obligations.

Given that there isn't enough money in the plan to continue to meet its obligations, I ask the Minister of Advanced Education: Where is the money to come from to ensure that the retired employees continue to receive their pensions?

**Ms. McGifford:** I thank the member for the question. As the member knows, many pension plans are under siege at this time. As I told him in my first answer, there will be a pension evaluation at the University of Manitoba in December 2009. At that point, at that time, with information gleaned from

that process, we'll be in a position—my understanding at the last evaluation is that the University of Manitoba was in a position of pension solvency.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Since the minister doesn't know, I'll give her the information. It has declined by more than 15 percent in value since last year. Eighty percent of the university's budget is already allocated to salaries and benefits. The rest goes to pay for items like library materials, equipment and operating expenses of the university. The university does not have enough money to close that pension gap.

So I ask the Minister of Advanced Education: Where is the extra money to come from? Will it come from government, from employees, or both?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we had a similar situation arising from the '95-96 pension plan that was bequeathed to us by members opposite where there was not enough revenue for the benefits, and we went back with all the health employees and renegotiated a more sustainable pension plan.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the marketplace has had good years, and it had a bad year last year. We will take a co-operative partnership approach with self-governing institutions like the universities, as we did with bodies like the health institutions in Manitoba.

#### **Personal Income Tax Reductions**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, the personal income tax filing deadline is fast approaching for many Manitobans. This is the time of year that Manitobans realize just how much money this government will allow them to keep.

One such Manitoban is Ed Nyczai. Mr. Nyczai thought it would be interesting to see what difference it would make if he filed his taxes in another province. Let's look at our neighbours to the west, for example; Saskatchewan, a former have-not province, which has successfully reduced its debt, by the way. In Saskatchewan, Mr. Nyczai would pay \$1,228 less in personal income tax than if he lived in Saskatchewan.

I ask the minister: Why has this government refused to allow hardworking Manitobans to keep more of their money?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the member calculates the taxes in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan government looked at affordability for living everywhere in

Canada, and they ranked Manitoba No. 1, in Saskatchewan. We didn't ask them to do it. They went and they took an objective look from their perspective, and they ranked Manitoba No. 1 for affordability, taxes included, hydro included, auto insurance included, all costs of living, all relevant costs of living included.

Saskatchewan acknowledges we're No. 1. Why can't the member opposite?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister refuses to recognize the difference of 2 percent in PST in Saskatchewan versus Manitoba. The fact remains a Manitoba family of four with a \$60,000 income pays the second-highest income tax in Canada, next to Québec.

Now, Mr. Nyczai went on to compare other provinces and, Mr. Speaker, the story gets worse. Mr. Nyczai pays \$1,400 more in Manitoba than he would in Ontario, almost \$2,600 more than in B.C.

Why has the minister reneged on his promise to reduce personal income taxes here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, there is \$110 million of personal income tax—or tax reductions in the budget this year.

If the member would look at the affordability advantage—I'll give him the page number, E15—a one-earner family of four, at \$60,000, the family he references, has the lowest combined taxes and living costs of any province in Canada. Number 1 right here in Manitoba, according to our evidence; No. 1 according to the analysis of the government of Saskatchewan. What's the member's problem?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister refused to acknowledge the \$129 vehicle registration fee that is a direct tax on Manitobans back to this government.

This budget is clearly a one-trick pony with no vision for the future. It appears Manitobans are destined to continue to pay some of the highest personal income taxes in Canada.

The provinces of Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have just undertaken an extensive review of their tax regimes. They have laid out both medium- and long-term goals and tax strategies.

Mr. Speaker, it appears this minister is flying by his pants, the seat of his pants. Why has he refused to provide Manitobans a concrete plan for Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** You know, Mr. Speaker, for 10 years we've said we'd keep Manitoba one of the most affordable places in Canada. For 10 years we have succeeded. In every single budget, we have kept Manitoba families of various configurations in the top three for affordability.

Why doesn't the member opposite mention the fact that our hydro-electricity rates are far lower by hundreds of dollars than Saskatchewan, and why doesn't the member mention, for some reason, the fact that we used to have the lowest telephone rates in Manitoba? Now we have the highest. They're still extremely low in Saskatchewan, and that's where they have retained their Crown corporation.

### Lake Dauphin Fishery Government Report

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Water Stewardship bragged about her conservation closure on the Turtle and Valley rivers for the period April 20 to May 3, yet no conservation closure was placed on the other tributaries of Lake Dauphin, including the Ochre River, Crawford Creek, Crooked Creek, Vermilion River, Wilson River and Mink Creek.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why she's relying on a Band-Aid solution rather than doing the right thing and placing a full closure on all the tributaries of Lake Dauphin during the critical spawning season? Half measures are not solutions.

\* (14:10)

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Well, déjà vu all over again, Mr. Speaker. In reading *Hansard*, he would have gotten the answer. I tried three times yesterday to explain to him that the science that was gathered by the department over the last number of years has shown us that we need to have a closure on the two main tributaries with sustenance fishing for the First Nations people on the remaining tributaries with a limit of six fish per day.

That is what the science has told us. We respect the science that comes from the department. We respect the experts who have spent the last year looking at what is needed to maintain the fishery on Lake Dauphin, and we announced the closure based on their recommendation.

**Mr. Briese:** Yesterday, the minister said it was based on science that she received just last year.

Now she says, over the last number of years. I wish she'd get her story straight.

Mr. Speaker, the minister claims she has a plan to protect Lake Dauphin walleye fishery, yet we have all seen a series of stopgap measures that aren't delivering meaningful results when it comes to restoring the health of the fishery.

It's been reported to us that this government has now purchased a truckload of fish fillets and is trying to distribute them to these people in lieu of them taking spawning fish.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that the department is offering frozen fish to try and encourage fishers not to take spawning fish?

**Ms. Melnick:** Well, in trying to understand that question, first there should be a closure; then there shouldn't be a closure; then we should work with the local community; then we shouldn't work with the local community.

Again, I'm going to try for the fifth time now. We announced a closure on the two main tributaries. There is sustenance fishing for First Nations people with a limit of six catches per day. We do not want to bring hardship upon the people who have traditionally fished, as is their treaty right. We are trying to ensure that we are working in the community so that the people who do need to benefit from what was the First Nations fishery over the last number of years, except for this year, are not suffering, Mr. Speaker.

We are trying to work with the community, so that people are getting what they need.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, it seems the minister's been caught with her hand in the freezer. People want decisive actions to protect the Lake Dauphin fishery. Instead, we've seen a series of Band-Aid solutions that include the use of a trap net and a partial conservation closure but no long-term action plan, and now they're handing out frozen fish to try to get people to stop fishing.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally admit that she has no plan to protect the walleye fishery? Will she now enact a full conservation closure on all the tributaries of Lake Dauphin?

**Ms. Melnick:** Well, the member opposite may want to belittle the closure. He may want to belittle our consultation with the First Nations people. He may want to belittle the fact that we are not wanting to bring hardship on the people who traditionally fish

during this time, as is their treaty right. He may also want to belittle the fact that we've lowered quotas from 750 to 500 pounds. He may also want to belittle the fact that we have cut recreational angling fishers from six to four fish and all the other conservation measures that we've taken.

That's because during their time, they did nothing, Mr. Speaker, and they can't stand the fact we're working with First Nations and all the other fishers on Dauphin Lake for a sustainable fishery for this generation of fishers and all the fishers—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Highway 355 Upgrade Requirements**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, one can almost anticipate the answer from a minister in this House. Back in the '90s is the way the answer will start, but perhaps the minister of highways will take this issue seriously because it is a serious one.

The residents of Cardale cannot get out of their community without driving through potholes that damage their vehicles. They have a short distance of 11 kilometres to get to Highway 250 in order to be able to access the grain transportation routes, but, Mr. Speaker, the roads are so badly beat up that cars are experiencing extreme damage when they travel this road.

I want to ask the minister of highways whether or not he has any plans to repair this road in the near future since this is not the first time that this issue has been brought to his attention.

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's 19,000 kilometres of highways in Manitoba, and we've addressed many of them and we'll continue to do so. We do work with the communities and also the local governments to ensure that we get their input into what their needs are and what their priorities are, and that'll certainly continue under this \$4-billion 10-year plan that we have.

We're really pleased, also, to work with the federal government on the Building Canada Fund, and we'll ensure that many, many roads and bridges are addressed.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, I want to focus the minister's attention to Highway 355, 11 kilometres east of Cardale, the only hardtop road that that community has to get out of that community and to

another community. The other roads around Cardale are all in gravel and in disrepair as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this minister who has heard about this road time and time and time again whether he's prepared to invest some money into this road to allow residents of Cardale to be able to access other roads so they can take their grain and other commodities to market as they should.

**Mr. Lemieux:** I do appreciate the question. I know the MLA for Russell is sincere about the question, as I am in my answer, Mr. Speaker.

We're working with all communities to ensure that the transportation system that they have to use is top quality and, as I mentioned, there are many, many highways that need to be addressed in this province, and we do have a plan set out in doing that.

The department has a great deal of input with regard to the priorities in the different regions of the province, Mr. Speaker, and the MLA for Russell knows this. They are certainly in contact with many of the stakeholders in these different regions.

So there is a plan in place, Mr. Speaker, to address the main arterial systems and the national highway system. These priorities are important to all of us because transportation is an economic enabler, and we're working very, very closely with many agricultural—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this road doesn't qualify for a national highway system. This is a short stretch of road, 11 kilometres.

Now, I am going to invite the minister to not fly over the area, but perhaps he can get in his vehicle, and I will accompany him. I'll even offer to drive him over that stretch of road so that he can see first-hand what state of disrepair this road is really in and the fact that residents of the area have gone through all the channels to try to get some action on this road, and they have not been able to get any action from the department.

So I'm asking the minister, the head of his department, to make sure that within the plans for this spring, 355 is included, so that the people of Cardale can have an adequate and a standard road to travel in and out of that community, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Members of this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, don't just fly over communities. We visit communities. We don't just walk into

communities and into the coffee shops and strut around and have a cup of coffee and then brag of what they've done, when it's this government that has put millions and millions of dollars into Manitoba's infrastructure, where members opposite did very little in the 1990s, as the member pointed out.

Mr. Speaker, not only have I driven there, I believe I played in their hockey rink there. I played junior hockey with one of their citizens from that community, so I know the community well. We're going to work with this community and many, many other communities in Manitoba to improve our infrastructure, and there will be a huge improvement to what has been there in the past. We'll be spending millions upon millions and millions of dollars in the future to make the transportation system the best of anywhere, bar none.

\*(14:20)

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Increase**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: The Premier has said that he's going to meet the Kyoto targets, yet the report released in the last 24 hours shows that the greenhouse gas production in Manitoba continues to go up and up to the point that it has now reached 13 percent over 1990 levels. Indeed, because the Kyoto target is 6 percent below 1990 levels, Manitoba is now almost 18 percent above the Kyoto targets.

Even now, many places that I look, Manitoba is taking actions which will increase instead of decrease greenhouse gases. For example, I learned that Manitoba Hydro, included in the government's summary budget, has been using old-style cut, slash, pile and burn approaches when clearing for the transmission line between the Wuskwatim and—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I know the member opposite is still intent on proposing a carbon tax here in the province. I would point out that the cap and trade has been recommended now by most provinces in Canada. It is now being adopted by President Obama in his discussions.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think that when he was minister of science, he closed any coal plants down in Canada. We're proud of closing a

coal plant, in the process of phasing out the second coal plant in this province.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is trying to dodge the question here. Greenhouse gas emissions have gone up and up and up under his watch. The Premier talks in one direction and then he acts in another. When the government has such poor leadership, there is a credibility problem for the Premier and his government.

While the Premier has been jaw jawing with people around the continent, the greenhouse gases have been going up, up, up here in Manitoba. Look, when you compare Manitoba to Québec, another province which uses hydro-electric power, the per capita production of greenhouse gases in Manitoba are almost twice the per capita production of greenhouse gases in Québec—not good.

Why has the Premier been so ineffective when you compare us to Québec and other provinces which have hydro-electric power?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the holier-than-thou member opposite, I'd ask him whether we've done better than the federal government. When he was a minister of the Crown, the Liberal government was in office—they talk about jaw jawing. They had no plan at all.

We've closed down hydro plants, Mr. Speaker. We have some legitimate challenges. The report indicates agriculture and livestock is one of the challenges we have in Manitoba. I noted that the member opposite voted against the localized capping of agricultural expansion unless they were part of anorexic digesters and other material. So talk about jaw jawing.

#### **McPhillips Street Station Casino Presence of Automated Teller Machines**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, gambling addiction is a very serious problem in Manitoba. In fact, it leads to many divorces, suicides, families that end up in turmoil, dysfunctional families and so forth. At a time in which we would like to see leadership on the issue of addiction from the government, we understand now that the McPhillips Street Casino is, in fact, going to start to have ATM services within the casino itself.

At one time, the New Democratic Party opposed that. My question for the government today is: Will they take a position and make it very clear to

Manitoba Lotteries that it is not appropriate to allow ATM machines in our casinos in Winnipeg?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act):** I thank the Member for Inkster for the question. The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation announced last week that it would be putting ATM machines in McPhillips Street Station. The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation has made this decision based on safety concerns. Many patrons of McPhillips Street Station have said they do not feel comfortable leaving the premises, having to walk out to McPhillips Street, around a commercial building and into an ATM located in the hotel next door or other ATMs. Acting on these safety concerns, the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation has determined that, in the best interests of their customers, they are making this decision.

I'm very proud, Mr. Speaker, of the effort that Lotteries makes to deal with responsible gaming. Manitoba Lotteries was the first provincial lotteries corporation to be involved in responsible gaming initiatives. They work closely with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and, indeed, advised the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba of this step and made sure—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### **Canadian Environmental Test Research and Education Center Government Initiative**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Recently, in Thompson, the largest and most advanced cold weather testing and research facility in the world was announced. Research and innovation are catalysts for new business opportunities and job creation, and this project will help generate new education, training and job opportunities in the north.

Would the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade please inform the House about this major northern initiative?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** I want to thank my friend from the north, the Member for Flin Flon, for that question.

Manitoba and, indeed, the world's aviation industry will benefit from the development of the global unique Canadian Environmental Test Research and Education Center in Thompson, in the north. This new state-of-the-art cold weather testing

facility will be created as a joint venture of Rolls Royce and Pratt & Whitney for testing the world's largest and greatest aircraft engines.

Manitoba is putting forward a \$9-million secured repayable loan which, together with the federal government's investment, will generate more than \$40 million in investment in northern Manitoba.

Manitoba has a green economy. We're building on it. We are now seen as leaders in the world, and we're going to use Manitoba's expertise and Manitoba's climate at developing cleaner and more efficient aircraft engines to benefit the entire world, Mr. Speaker.

### **Rural Health-Care Services Wait Times**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, this minister knows that patients in Westman are already waiting weeks or months to see an orthopedic specialist, but that's not the only problem. Because of this government's failure to keep our doctors in rural Manitoba, patients are not getting the care they need after surgery either.

One of my constituents recently had shoulder surgery in Brandon. She had to wait a full month for a follow-up appointment with the specialist, twice as long as it should have been. As a result, she couldn't start physiotherapy until five weeks after the surgery. Because of these delays, my constituent will have to have eight full months of therapy, nearly three times longer in her therapy than if she would have started on time.

Can the Minister of Health explain to my constituent why she must pay the price for this NDP's failure?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** We know that reducing wait times is a priority for this government. Indeed, it has been a priority across the nation to bring down wait times and to reduce access.

I believe the member knows that when we came into office in 1999 the focus was on lifesaving surgeries. We went from dangerously long wait times for radiation therapy, for example, at six weeks, to now having the shortest wait time in the nation. We also have the shortest wait times for elective cardiac surgery. Then we moved on to quality of life surgeries, including orthopedic surgery. We've significantly brought down those wait times.

I'm very pleased to work with the member on issues concerning a specific constituent to see if we can improve that situation the best way that we can, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Rowat:** My constituent did indicate that they can't do anything for his wife and the minister would probably be saying, we can maybe look at her situation. It's too late, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what this minister has said is that she cannot—what this minister knows is she cannot keep doctors in rural Manitoba. She's had 10 years and she has more than doubled the health-care budget, but she still can't keep her Premier's (Mr. Doer) promise to fix health care.

Patients like my constituent deserve better. When they finally get the surgery they need, they should get top-notch care. Instead, just when they think they're finally getting the help that they need, they're put on another wait list.

My constituent wants answers. Can the Minister of Health explain to her why she didn't get the care she needed when she needed it?

**Ms. Oswald:** Again, Mr. Speaker, improving access to physician services and to increasing our supply of nurses is very important to us and to all Manitobans. We know that we have seen a net gain of physicians to the province of Manitoba every year since coming into office.

It's worthwhile to note, Mr. Speaker, that there was a net loss, a net loss of doctors every year or virtually every year during the '90s when the members opposite were making decisions like cutting spaces in medical school.

I also think it's worthwhile to note that the independent data provided by Manitoba's nursing colleges this week tells us that we had a net gain of 245 nurses last year. That's a total net increase of over 2,000. That means that for every thousand they fired, we hired two back.

\* (14:30)

### **Provincial Road 340 Upgrade Requirements**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Now, contrary to the Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), I actually have a bridge but no road. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to Provincial Road

340 between Canadian Forces Base Shilo and Wawanesa.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there has been a bridge over the Assiniboine River for quite some time now. I would invite the Minister of Transportation to come out, bring his fishing rod when fishing season opens, and we'll catch some walleye.

I ask him: There's a 13-kilometre stretch of road that has not been paved. I'm wondering if the minister is considering making a permanent investment in this particular stretch of road.

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Well, I thought that fishing season may have started. He's fishing for more cash but, yet, votes against our budget.

Mr. Speaker, you know, if it's not this road, it's that road. If it's not that bridge, it's this bridge, but yet they vote against the budget every single year. Go around to the coffee shops and say that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important road; we know this. We've had many discussions and we continue to do so on how to best address this particular stretch of road. I'll continue to work with the MLA to see that this will happen in the future.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Jaring Timmerman

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I would like to put a few words on the record today about Mr. Jaring Timmerman, a centenarian who has enjoyed some extraordinary athletic accomplishments as of late.

This past Saturday, Mr. Timmerman, who just celebrated his 100th birthday on February 11, broke three world records while competing in the Manitoba Masters Swimming Championship in the 100-to-104 age category. He set records in the 50-metre and 100-metre freestyle events as well as the 50-metre backstroke.

Mr. Timmerman has been a significant presence on the competitive swim scene for some time. He has won so many medals at the World Masters Games and other events that he has started to give his medals to his family and friends as he has lost count of how many he has won. Next month, Mr. Timmerman will travel to Etobicoke, Ontario, to compete in the Canadian Masters Championship.

In order to stay active, Mr. Timmerman swims laps almost every day. He believes that the key to his longevity is a combination of good genes, healthy eating, exercise and smart living. Mr. Timmerman has such a passion for the sport he believes in that he says he will never stop swimming. Others have noticed his enthusiasm and dedication to his sport. He's been an inspiration to everyone around him and has been, recently, the CTV Sport Star of the Week. His positive example undoubtedly has inspired others to stay active regardless of their age.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus, I would like to congratulate Jaring Timmerman on breaking three world records at the Manitoba Masters Swimming Championship on Saturday. I would also like to proudly point out that Mr. Timmerman happens to be the oldest member of the Progressive Conservative Party, and as leader of the party, I'd like to thank him for being a proud Progressive Conservative. Thank you.

##### Manitoba Citizens on Patrol Conference

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about an event I attended on April 18. The 2009 Manitoba Citizens on Patrol conference was held this past weekend. I attended on behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), to proclaim the week of April 19 to 25 as Manitoba Citizens on Patrol Week.

The Citizens on Patrol Program, or COPP, is a group of law enforcement volunteers dedicated to building safer communities. COPP mobilizes citizens throughout Manitoba to participate in community-based crime prevention in co-operation with local law enforcement agencies. The program began in Manitoba in 1991, initially guided by local law enforcement. In March 2001, Manitoba Public Insurance partnered with Manitoba Justice to improve support and networking opportunities for COPP groups throughout the province. There are now more than 65 COPP groups in Manitoba, with nearly 1,700 volunteers. Their approach to crime fighting focusses on deterrence, education and awareness. Thanks to COPP, missing persons have been found, stolen cars have been recovered and criminal activities have been investigated.

When I think of COPP, I think of people who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty and get down to work. I think of community-minded people who want to make a difference. I think of people who are willing to volunteer their personal time to improve the personal safety and property of their neighbours.

Two dedicated individuals were recognized at this year's conference: Constable Stacey Gervin received the Law Enforcement Service Award, and Mr. Jack Slessor received the Lifetime Membership Award.

Mr. Speaker, community volunteerism is one of the things that makes Manitoba great. I would ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Manitoba Citizens on Patrol for another successful conference, staff of MPI for their assistance and to recognize these volunteers for all that they do to make our province a better place. Thank you.

### Holocaust Memorial Day

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Today, on Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, we honour those who perished in the senseless act of terrorism that took place in Nazi concentration camps in World War II.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to be there to read names of individuals this morning, as well as in the afternoon attend a service in front of the Holocaust Memorial on the lawn of the Legislative Building, the annual public commemorative service entitled, We Remember Our Past, We Trust in the Future.

Mr. Speaker, unto every person there is a name, and with each name there is a heartbreaking story. Among those who read the names of lives lost this morning was my constituent, Arnold Frieman. He is a Holocaust survivor who lost his family to Nazis' atrocities. His personal experiences and courage are moving to me and to members of our community. As a teenager in Hungary, Mr. Frieman survived the ravages of the Nazis' regime, but his parents, siblings and extended family, sadly, did not. After escaping Hungary and travelling to Norway, Mr. Frieman went on to bravely serve in the Israeli War of Independence. He later settled in Winnipeg where he overcame the great sorrows of his past to become a dedicated family man, entrepreneur and local leader.

Mr. Speaker, in honour of Mr. Frieman, and of the millions of Jews who lost their lives in this senseless act of terrorism, I'd like to read into the record the poem, "Unto Every Person There is a Name." This verse expresses what we must hold true:

Unto Every Person There is a Name / bestowed upon him by God / and given to him by his father and mother. / Unto Every Person There is a Name / accorded him by his stature / and the manner of his

smile / and given him by his style of dress. / Unto Every Person There is a Name / conferred on him by the mountains / and given him by his neighbours. / Unto Every Person There is a Name / assigned him by his sins / and given him by his yearnings. / Unto Every Person There is a Name / given to him by his enemies / and given him by his love. / Unto Every Person There is a Name / derived from his festivals / and given him by his labour. / Unto Every Person There is a Name / presented him by the seasons / and given him by his blindness. / Unto Every Person There is a Name.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### Doug and Cheryl Slater

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about two of my constituents, Doug and Cheryl Slater.

Doug is an accomplished fisherman and entrepreneur. He was born in The Pas in 1929 and has lived in Flin Flon for 75 of his 80 years. He worked for Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting Company from 1948 to 1965, and again from 1970 until his retirement in 1993. Since 1949, Doug has caught well over 100 master angler trout and written several articles on lake trout fishing. He and Cheryl have many trophy fish hanging on display in the Flin Flon airport. In July 1967, Doug caught the largest fish ever to be mounted out of Little or Big Athapap. It was 51 inches. It hung at Paradise Lodge for 41 years until it deteriorated, but a new replica will soon be on display at the Flin Flon Wal-Mart.

Cheryl is a master angler many times over. When it comes to fishing, she usually waits for Doug to catch up. She graduated with honours in 1985 and also worked at HBM&S. Together they raised a family and ran a business. In the mid-1980s, they made a special trip to Winnipeg to show Conservation officials the proper way to debone Northern Pike. Previously, the Manitoba fishing guide had recommended cutting off the whole back of the fish, but Doug and Cheryl demonstrated how to properly cut out the Y-bone and the bones in the tail without hurting the fillet.

With all his fishing experience, Doug was able to successfully design and patent his own lure or treble hook jig in 1975. It is called the Slater Lure and has been on the market for 34 years.

Besides being a fisherman, Doug was also an accomplished water-skier. He ran the Flin Flon water-skiing club from 1950 until 1964. The club



held an annual water-skiing show that included pyramids, ski jumping and kite flying. In 1956, Doug was the first person in Canada to build and fly a water-skiing kite, which is now on display in the Selkirk Marine Museum.

Mr. Speaker, it never ceases to amaze me how many creative and innovative people reside in my constituency, wonderful people like Doug and Cheryl Slater. Thank you.

\*(14:40)

### **Grant and Colleen Dyck**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I rise today to congratulate my constituents, Grant and Colleen Dyck, on becoming Manitoba's Outstanding Young Farmers for the year 2009. Grant and Colleen operate Artel Farms in Niverville, Manitoba, which consists of a 13,000-acre grain and oilseed enterprise. Along with the grain farm, the couple owns a business which reclaims and recycles wood, and Colleen has started a business producing value-added energy bars using ingredients from their farm.

As Manitoba's Outstanding Young Farmers, Grant and Colleen have been recognized for their progress in agriculture, financial management practices, production history, environmental stewardship and for their contributions to the well-being of their community, Niverville. Their passion for farming, strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit have enabled them to be extremely successful in each of their endeavours and important contributors to their community.

Grant and Colleen are also skilled in turning challenges into opportunities. Such is the case for their reclaimed wood business, which reclaims landfill-diverted Dutch elm diseased trees in Winnipeg and turns them into flooring. They also use maple from CN rail boxes and grain elevator beams for making furniture.

Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers Program is designed to recognize farm couples that exemplify excellence in their profession.

We wish Grant and Colleen well as they have been selected for the Manitoba contingent that will go on to represent our province and our region at the national awards program in Ottawa this coming December.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to congratulate Grant and Colleen on their remarkable achievement in receiving this special recognition. They are innovative, spirited and their love for agriculture is evident in their success. They are truly excellent role models for young farmers across the province and across our country. Thank you.

### **House Business**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on House business?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Yes, on House business, Mr. Speaker.

Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby). The title of the resolution is Daycares—Early Childhood Family Support. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Pursuant to rule 31(8), it's been announced that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable Member for Southdale. The title of the resolution is Daycares—Early Childhood Family Support.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)**

#### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** I ask that we resolve the House into Committee of Supply.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Would the Chairs go the appropriate rooms that they will be chairing, please. In the Chamber will be Executive Council; Room 255 will be Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; and Room 254 will be Justice.

#### **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)**

#### **JUSTICE**

\*(15:00)

**Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yesterday we were talking about Crown cautions, and I understand now that the department does keep a record of Crown cautions. I'm wondering if the minister could provide us the numbers for Crown cautions, especially if you can put in some sort of a time period of a few years.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** As I understand it, the Crown caution information is not kept for statistical purposes; it's kept for the purposes of the particular individual that's under the particular charging regime or prosecution regime, so we don't have like a percentage of how many Crown cautions—we don't have that data in that form available.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** When it comes time for government setting policy in dealing with young offenders—even earlier than young offenders—I would think that there's a requirement to have a fairly accurate sense of what sort of criminal activity or minor offences that are taking place. Is that not a fair assessment?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, for both the process of judicial interim release and for the process of sentencing and for the very process of dealing with an individual, a record of activities of that individual is very important and it deals with a whole series of factors related to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** In developing programs like the Lighthouse program and others—there's all sorts of departments that provide different funding for community centres and so forth—one would suspect that there is a need to have a fairly good understanding of what types of activities our young people are dealing in. Some of those activities would be of a criminal nature potentially. Do you not agree?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I think a more relevant index would be the poverty index or a social services index that would relate to the kind of community and the kind of environment that surrounds particular individuals would probably be more realistic understanding of what the causality are and the factors are with respect to criminal behaviour.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I don't want to spend too much time on this particular point. You know, one of the

issues over the last number of years has been the issue of automobile theft, and we'll use that as an example. You know, a few years ago, there were some 300—between 200 to 300 high-risk offenders that were identified, and because we were able to acknowledge and identify these individuals, special policy was developed, and it had a fairly dramatic impact on the number of vehicles being stolen. I think that that was one of the benefits of having a good understanding of the problem and who's causing the problem.

The question I would have is—because the minister often makes reference to it during question period—the percentage of decrease in automobile theft. I know that it was spiked—a huge high, somewhere around 13,000; I think it was in 2004, maybe 2003—and since then it has gone down. Can the minister provide what the average would have been in the '90s in terms of the number of vehicles being stolen?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, I'll provide the member with that information. Just two quick points on this. In the '90s, within a very short period of time in the constituency in which I was elected to represent, there were two people killed as a result of auto theft in the mid-'90s, which was horrific. The benefit of the specific action that was taken, that took place and that our government directed towards auto theft, was informative, and we intend to use that model across other realms of activity.

The important factor was determining the perpetrators, the reason for, et cetera, and we were able to identify, contrary to what public perception might have been, as to what motivated these individuals to be stealing autos. That's one of the reasons why we've been able to reduce the auto theft rate by 64 percent.

With respect to specific offenders, the member's point is well taken in terms of identifying particular perpetrators in dealing with the causality factor. Overall, the point I made earlier with respect to the poverty and the related index, it's probably more indicative of overall difficulties that are going to be incurred by a population, be it health or whatever, generally is based on those socio-economic factors.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I did want again to comment on the issue of car theft, only because it's one of those issues which attracts a great deal of public attention. And this is why I had asked in terms of the breakdown and what happened in the '90s, when the minister makes reference to that substantial decrease

in automobile thefts, he's really talking about that years of 2003-2004. My understanding is, in the mid-'90s, late '90s, that it was substantially less. That's why it would be interesting to actually see some of the numbers. I don't believe, for example, that, in the '90s, it ever exceeded 8,000 vehicles being stolen. I could be wrong on that, and that's why there would be some benefit, in terms of hearing the numbers.

If the minister would like, he can comment on that. Otherwise, I'll just move on to my final item.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I think the overall conclusion is that, until we took specific, dedicated action to deal with the particular problem, it would have gone unresolved. It was allowed to grow and, only when we put concerted effort into it, concerted resources into it, were we able to reduce it to levels that were comparable—in fact, that were some of the best in 20 years.

I think, overall, the strategy that, if you identify and put resources into a particular problem and work on it aggressively and with using the continuum, that you can reduce particular types of offences. I think that applies. Left unchecked, it would have continued to grow. Fortunately, we put in a concerted effort and concerted resources to deal with it. We intend to take that model and use it in other aspects of criminal and social activity. But the fundamental issue, if one is to talk to criminologists and others, is the fundamental factors that result in antisocial behaviour, is related to socio-economic factors.

\*(15:10)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chair, I guess I would use this just to conclude. The minister is starting to actually make the point that I was hoping to try to get across and that is that, you see, the more that you have a good, comprehensive understanding of a situation, i.e., the automobile theft issue, you're able to come up with proactive policy that can really have an impact.

I think that if you can ask many of our constituents they would indicate that they are concerned about the different types of—one could call minor crimes, but you know, all crimes are crimes, but the overall feeling that I get is that people are feeling uneasy with the types of crimes that are occurring in the community in the sense that the government doesn't seem to be doing anything to address that issue. That's why yesterday we started talking about cautions and what happens if little

Johnny gets caught stealing a CD, and quite often there is no real consequence.

I would argue that that's sadly the case more often than we probably think or would acknowledge at this particular table, but it's important for us to understand some of those numbers even though those numbers are not being recorded or reported on. There is a great deal of theft. You will get some of the larger stores, for example, that will no longer contact the police because they deem it's in their best interest just to take care of it locally. Well, a number of years ago that wouldn't have been the case. There would have been some reporting.

So I think that we're missing the boat if we don't try to get a better understanding of the types and the amounts of crimes that are, in fact, taking place, because I believe it would ultimately help us in providing the programming that's necessary in order to combat some of the causes of crime.

That's the reason why I raised it in the fashion that I did. I also personally believe—and as the minister knows, I was with the Justice Committee—that, ultimately, for any given crime, there needs and must be a consequence. I find more than ever that we're starting to lose the consequence in many minor crimes that are taking place. That does offend me and I believe offends a great number of people that we all represent.

Thank you for the time, and I appreciate the Member for Steinbach affording me the opportunity to ask questions at this time.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I appreciate the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), as he always does, taking an interest in community safety issues. I know he's a strong advocate for those issues in his community and appreciate the work that he does in his community on these and other issues that are important to his residents.

Just to follow up on a couple of his questions. I mean, I was going more schematic in terms of questions, but just to follow up on the member going through his points. I think it was three years ago in Estimates, I'd asked for the—it was either in Estimates or in another forum—but I had asked for the Crown cautions and I received the answer from the department. It was a former minister who provided that information.

So has there been a change in the last couple of years in terms of how this information is put together, or did the former minister just, you know,

go out of his way to provide the information at that time?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Between the requests that come from FIPPA and the requests that come from the media and the various statistical analyses being done across the country now, there's information that's put together routinely. There's information that put together requests. There's information that's utilized for internal programming purposes, and there's information that's provided publicly, and we try to provide as much information as we can from the—but there's some danger sometimes. There's some danger sometimes in extrapolating information. If one takes a direct—it depends on how one interprets it. If one were to say—the Member for Inkster said that there should be consequences for every offence.

One could argue that where has the member been over the past years when a former minister and myself passed on all of these messages to Ottawa with respect to the Criminal Code and the Youth Criminal Justice Act that required changing to have more consequences.

So it's sometimes difficult to ascertain and to make the direct connection. I agree that, in fact, statistical data is informative and helpful, but, on occasion, if it gets misinterpreted, it often gives an inappropriate picture of actually what's happening on the ground.

So, to get back to the point, I don't think we collect the data on the Crown cautions on a regular basis, and if it was provided to the member previously, I suppose we could undertake to try to accumulate the data for this year. But, every time we do that, it does take some of our Crown prosecutors and other people away from other activities.

But this is an important committee. If people want that information, we'll provide it.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member for that commitment, and because my friend from Inkster also asked for that information, I can either provide it to him as well or I can share it with him, whatever you prefer.

But I do think that the information is important. The minister was asking sort of where—and I wasn't looking outside. If he can forgive me, I'm not sure if he was talking to me or the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) on where we've been on issues about the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other

initiatives from Ottawa. I can provide to him more news releases that he'll want to read, that I've said, yes, there needs to be changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other issues like two-for-one and things that we've talked about.

So I don't want him to leave on the record any indication that I may not have been supportive of those federal changes. I wasn't sure whom he was looking at, and I'll leave the Member for Inkster to defend his own record on that if it wasn't directed at me.

Is there a listing of alternative programs, then, or alternative measures that the department has that they can refer young offenders to when they're not allowed, under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, to go to a court sanction?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I've just Blackberried up some numbers, and I have some numbers in front of me on another matter, so I'll try to do a couple of things at once.

There are currently 47 justice committees and four paid agencies that do case diversions. The four agencies are Mediation Services, Onashowewin Mediation Services and Northern Restorative Justice. We also work with MKO and the north and southern Chiefs to create justice committees in their communities, and the MMF will be creating a community justice worker to support Métis people where cases can be diverted.

Case diversion can take several routes. The police, at their discretion, can issue a caution or warning for first-time minor offences. Justice has worked with the police on areas of concern to have youth involved in certain types of offences, such as joy-riding, referred to a community justice program as opposed to a warning.

If police do not decide to issue a warning, the Crown can also caution, as has already been indicated. The Crown can also decide to divert the case to one of the agencies or a local committee. The agency or committee will then decide how to manage the case and report back to the Crown on the results. Every effort is made to involve the victim in case resolutions.

The auto theft numbers that I have: 1994–8,541; '95–8,733; '96–9,449; '97–9,914; '98–9,013; '99–9,385; 2000–10,496; 2001–12,056; 2002–11,093; 2003–12,039; 2004–16,213 province-wide; 2005–13,991; 2006–16,986; 2007–14,594; 2008–8,662.

So the 2008 numbers are now back to the 1994 numbers.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'll review *Hansard* and see. I wasn't sort of keeping up. I know the minister can do more than one thing at one time. I've seen that in the past, so that's fine.

The minister refers to, then, a number of Justice programs, Justice committees that they can be used for alternative measures. But I'm still unclear on maybe what the end result of that is, what the Justice committees or what the programs are actually then asking these young offenders to do as their consequence. I think, in this accord, I and the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) are on the same page in that we've talked about our party, about meaningful but measured consequences for all actions. I mentioned that I don't think that people who are shoplifting for a first time should be occupying a cell at the Manitoba Youth Centre, but I do think that there should be some meaningful but measured consequence.

So, you know, it's probably not easy because there might be a variety of different means, and maybe there's a lot of flexibility in the programs and the Justice committees in terms of what alternative measures are applied. But can the minister give a range of the sort of things that these young offenders might be doing or asked to do?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The common consequences are restitution, community service, attending programming or working with the victim. Those are the four major community-related consequences.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Would that be similar to other jurisdictions? I know some provinces, when I have checked on the Internet, will actually list a variety of different alternative measures that they've set out under their Youth Criminal Justice Act requirements to fulfil. Would those be sort of similar to what might happen in other provinces? Are they more extensive, less extensive, about the same?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I am advised by the department that it would be about the same, and part of the difficulties—I was trained under the original Youth Justice Act a long time ago and—no, we just came out of the Juvenile Delinquents Act. I do get confused sometimes. But I'm advised that it's generally the same here as in other jurisdictions.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Then, just because we're sort of talking about measures, and I know the switch is more to the adult side, but, on the parole side, the parole officers that you currently have in place, do you know what their average caseload is? I mean, this is sort of a typical question that we ask, and I don't know that it's changed much over the years, but do you have the caseloads for parole officers?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We don't have that with us today, but we'll provide that information, recognizing that in something like the Spotlight program you'd have more intensive work, and then it varies across the board and across the issues. But I will try to provide that information.

**Mr. Goertzen:** That's fine, I appreciate that.

You know, one of the things that—I just want to harken back a bit to the point the minister was making a couple of questions ago. I know he's sensitive about, you know, releasing information and some of that, as we've discovered, is a security issue. I certainly understand that. Nobody wants to put anybody working in Justice at risk and so those are valid comments.

We get a little bit more concerned, you know, when the minister says that he doesn't want to release information because of how it might be interpreted because ultimately I think the public has to decide what that information means and how valuable it is. We saw reports from Statistics Canada today, and so people can—those statistics get put out there, people can interpret them, and there might be logical explanations for all sorts of statistics we get. They get released and may not be a negative reflection.

So, I think that sometimes I worry—and I'll use this example, and I'm going to ask about parole breaches. I use this example because I've talked to parole officers, some current and some former parole officers, who've told me that they have a number of their own sort of breaches, people who aren't reporting, but they don't have a collective number in the department at any given one time of how many people have breached. In response to the question that I asked this particular officer about why that number wasn't there, it wasn't because they didn't believe, it wasn't because it was difficult to obtain. They said they could report the breaches every day at the end of the day and every officer, I guess, could do the same and it could be quickly tabulated, but they thought that that might not, sort of, reflect well.

They didn't say that, you know, the minister had told them not to report it or anything like that, so I don't want to leave that allegation out there. But I guess sometimes there's just a concern that it would be easy to tabulate the information, but if you don't tabulate it, then when somebody asks for it, you can say, well, we don't keep it in that form, or we don't have those sorts of records.

So that was a concern that this particular parole officer expressed to me: that it wasn't that they didn't have their own information on breaches, and it wasn't that it couldn't be easily tabulated; it's just that nobody ever asked for it, and they didn't think they would actually be asked for it because it may not reflect well overall. And I wouldn't want the minister to use that sort of a strategy, and I'm not suggesting he is. But I guess the question I'd like to know is: Can I get a tabulation of the current breaches that parole officers have, whether that's calculated monthly, daily, yearly, in whatever form it's tabulated, particularly if it's not difficult to come by?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, the comment I was making was editorial and actually the member inadvertently made my point, because parole is federal, probation is—that was the point I was trying to make; that was not meant as a—it was an editorial about confusion sometimes between, for example, the narcotics, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, and the fact that it's federally prosecuted, versus Criminal Code offences that are provincially prosecuted and then you cross reference and you may not get specific—so that was the point that I was trying to make, is an extrapolation sometime on one-to-one. I think the member appreciates that.

That was the editorial comment I was making. I don't have any difficulty except for security which I'm quite paranoid about. I think the member recognizes that. I don't have any difficulty providing information, but the member acknowledges that sometimes even the very terminology we use can confuse the case in point.

Now, the member was looking for information on?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Sorry. Probation breaches. I think I was harkening back to a different job I used to have a few years ago and got confused about that. So, probation.

**Mr. Chomiak:** On probation, we don't have an overall record of—we deal with the individual cases,

and case management has actually been introduced in the department of Prosecutions, and I think it's right across the system, essentially. It's case management of a particular individual, be they in custody or not in custody or, in fact, facing charges. So, overall, we don't keep that record.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Okay, then, so I'll just return to the other point, even though I was using the wrong terminology. When I was talking to a current or former provincial probation officer, they were suggesting that they know on a day-to-day basis how many breaches they have and that it wouldn't be difficult, if anybody would ask, to get the total number, because it would simply go to the probation officers across the system and get that number. So is it possible to get the total number of probation breaches that are currently in the system?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I don't think we have that in a cumulative way. Part of the issue, I think, is related to the individuals and the particular circumstances in which they're in. For example, if you're to deal with—let's take something that's current—the auto theft breach-of-probation issue. I'm not sure if, depending on the individual circumstances of an individual, I'm extrapolating, and the assistant deputy minister will acknowledge if I'm wrong. I suspect that not in every case that a probation is breached will they necessarily invoke a judicial sanction. It might depend on—there are so many circumstances that are related to the particular case and individual in point that it's a decision based on the individual probation officer and the particular regime that's in place.

\* (15:30)

Now, having said that, overall, it would be taken more seriously in the case of an auto theft perpetrator who's been breached or who's been many times in difficulty. So it's an individual file based on the circumstances. There's a risk level that's attached to individuals. There are standards that are applied. Then that discretion is utilized by the probation officer to deal with the particular individual.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm not sure if the minister isn't understanding—I may not be explaining myself properly, or I may, and we're just going around on this. But, at the end of the day, the way it was explained to me by a probation officer in Manitoba, they know how many people that they're responsible for that are in breach—whether it would warrant a judicial sanction or not—that they, individually, know how many people that they're responsible for that are in breach. Is that correct, or do they not know?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Okay, thank you. I appreciate the answer. So is it not possible then to go to the provincial probation officers and ask them, at the end of a day or a month or a quarter, and ask them how many people they have in breach, and have a total. I don't want to grind the Department of Justice to a halt. It's just that it doesn't seem that it would be that difficult.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Anything's possible, but it would not tell us anything significant that's required to be known about the individual that's under the particular orders. It's not of relevance to the department to have that particular statistic. What is relevant is what is happening on the individual case file as it works its way through the system. That's the relevant issue that applies within the system. That's all I can say.

**Mr. Goertzen:** All right, so I'm not going to accept the fact that it might not be useful information, but let's assume it is, that's it's not helpful information, but it's also not difficult information to put together. So I'm just asking if the minister could provide, whether it's for today or next week, just a one-day snapshot on the number of breaches that exist with probation officers. We can have a further debate about the value of the information.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Again, I don't want to be difficult, but a breach may not be a judicial or a criminal sanction. A breach may simply be a condition, partially met or not met, and there's no sanction and no charge laid, for example, or it may get staid or it may be—the probation officers have the discretion to make judgmental decisions with respect to the individual cases.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I accept that, that each case is going to have its own value and its own reasons. Some might be significant and some might be very insignificant. Just asking, because the minister acknowledged and the probation officer acknowledged that, at the end of the day, they know how many breaches, important or not—I guess they're all important but, you know—warranting other sanctions or not, that they have. The minister indicated that it could be possible to simply tally those up at the end of a day. I'm just asking if he'll do that for me. He can explain why it's insignificant, but can we just simply get that data?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Breach is a legal term. So breach is an allegation that a condition imposed by a court has not been complied with, and, therefore, can or

cannot, depending on the circumstances, bring the offender back before the court.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think I would try for three years to try to get this information. I don't think I'm getting any more success than in the prior three years and again, I mean, this is from somebody who either was or is working within the system and said this is very easy information to obtain. We can debate the value of it. I think I get the point: the minister is not going to provide it. He's not going to ask that it be put together.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'm advised by officials that it's not kept. It would be difficult to obtain and difficult to actually ascertain specifically what is being sought after. I'm not trying to be lawyer-like, but—a client comes in and says, I wasn't supposed to be out after 4 o'clock, but I'm out after 4 o'clock to meet. Is that a breach of my probation when I'm—you know, and I say, well, I'd phone the probation officer and say, well he came in to meet—you know, there are varying circumstances. I don't think that we can provide that information on a legal, consistent basis that would provide the kind of information the member is looking for.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I think if the probation officer registers them in breach, then that's the number we're looking for, but regardless. I know that the minister doesn't feel it's viable information and we can have that. I think we might disagree on that, and I don't think I'm going to be getting any further because I can't make him produce the information even if others working on the front lines of that feel that the information is easy to obtain and they individually can tell me at any given time what their breaches are. I guess I could extrapolate that, but again the value of that information we can have that debate about.

I did say that we were going to talk about recidivism, so I want to sort of get back on track of that because who knows we might be in these Estimates for weeks, and I don't want to be missing out some of these points. The most recent data that the department did collect and provide, and I appreciate it, is on recidivism rates for the adult prison population, the youth population. I'm not sure what—I think it's collected quarterly. What's the most recent data that the department has and could they provide that?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, the most recent data that we have on adult recidivism goes back to December '06, and the definition used in Manitoba is

two years post conclusion of your sentence, which is the most aggressive recidivism rate that we're aware of and there's no national comparison.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Right from the mouth of the experts, so that's good to know.

I appreciate that there are different standards. I realize that, and I think sort of that whatever standard you'd use, our recidivism rates seem quite high. You might compare them and say, well, but they measure three years in a different jurisdiction when, you know, their jurisdiction is bad too. I mean the reality is that our recidivism rates just seem very high.

Is there a goal? I'm reluctant to ask the question because I'm sure the minister is going to say that his goal is zero recidivism, but is there a targeted approach and goals that the department looks to and says, look, at the end of two years we'd like to have recidivism down to this rate? I mean, realistic rates, I know, what the goal for everybody would be zero, but what would be that target and how the department intends to get there?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, the goal of the department is to lower the recidivism rates, and that's one of the reasons for compiling the rates in order for the department to be able to gauge itself over a period of time. The goal is to lower the recidivism rates.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Goertzen:** I mean, I appreciate that I think that that's the right broad goal. Are there no sort of targets set out on a two-, five-, 10-year framework? I guess one could—at one point, I think the recidivist rate for the Youth Centre was 100 percent. So I guess if we got the 99 percent, then you would say the goal was met.

But is there sort of a longer-term projection of goals that is more narrow and more focussed than to just lower the rates?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism across the system. There is no two- or five- or 10-year target. There's a correlation between the offences that people have been sentenced for and their risk association. It's much higher than it has been in the past.

There are a number of factors that reflect the recidivism issue. The changing in sentencing standards as a result of changes to the Criminal Code will reflect that.

It's true that in areas where there's more direct supervision, that the recidivism rates are more favourable.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think that there should be sort of more defined goals. I think that it's often nice to have those specific goals to reach, to reach them. But, I mean, the goals, to lower them and sort of see how it goes. It's at pretty high mark and so I think we all would hope that that would be the case.

So the department, obviously then, goes back two years post-release to see if the individuals are back, charged or in custody. Is there any sort of further analysis than that? Is there any sort of individual contact with those who have re-offended to get a sense of the challenges of why they weren't able to not commit another crime, whether it was post-release programs or just simply an unwillingness? How deep does that analysis go?

**Mr. Chomiak:** On re-admission, the entire process is repeated with respect to the risk factors and all the associated factors. All of the factors are taken into consideration in dealing with the re-admitted individual.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So you get a good idea, then, on the re-admission because you're going through the risk analysis again which we talked about yesterday. From that process, can the minister give a broad indication of why the recidivism rate seems to be stubbornly high? What is it that's driving individuals to re-offend over and over again?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The answer varies—the answer's quite complex, and what I'll do is provide the member with a written—rather than convey—the complexity of the matter is such that I'll provide a written response to the member with respect to that particular issue, because statistically it's just quite interesting because there are a number of issues. The more supervision one has in the community, the more likely one will be breached or one will be—sanctions will be applied against an individual, the type of sentencing, the type of individual. So I'll provide a written statement to the member outlining those factors and the information that we use and how we apply it.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate that and it wasn't—I'm glad the minister didn't just give me sort of a snippet answer, because it is a difficult question. I think that it probably does take someone else. I'm glad that that analysis is happening and sort of look forward to seeing the results of that because it is not an easy answer, but it's just good that that discussion is



obviously happening. I'm sure that the response I get from the minister will be deep and thought-provoking.

On the issue, then, of measuring recidivism or measuring success of programs, and this isn't a value-laden question to the minister. I suspect all governments fall into this when there's good news to report on programs; it shows up in a press release, and when there's bad news, you sort of find out in some other ways that are less public. That's maybe just the nature of our system. I don't know that any one particular government falls more prey to that than others.

But we have heard a lot of comments about The Safer Communities Act and the success of the act and my friend and former employer would be upset if I didn't mention, I think, that this comes from the old community protection act, I think it was called at the time. It was introduced in 1999 or 1998 and, I think, it was passed but not proclaimed until the government changed and then the acts were largely the same except for the application process. There was a change to the application process, which I don't have criticism of—but I'm glad that there was that sort of legacy act that was able to get some good results and get some good media play as well.

Other programs that have come in under this government, such as the Spotlight program or the Turnabout program, I've heard different reports. I haven't seen a report recently on the Spotlight program, I don't believe. Can the minister just sort of tell me how many individuals are in the program, how many have graduated from the program and how you measure the success of it? I guess that's also whether or not youth are staying out of gangs or are getting out of those gangs and how long do you wait before you look back at those youth and see where they're at. Is that two years or five years, and just how you measure the success of a program like that.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'll get the specifics on the Spotlight. I do know from my discussions with the ADM that the Spotlight program, like a lot of intensive programs, is measured sometimes in case of months; if an individual is not involved, that's considered a success. That's the intensity, but we'll provide that information.

\* (15:50)

I'm glad the member made the point about the Safer Communities program, and in conjunction with the criminal forfeiture act, because those are

examples of a couple programs that without amendment were not workable. The initial safest community program and the original forfeiture program both required amendments. It's an interesting extrapolation because other provinces have now copied the Manitoba safer communities, and across the country, the Manitoba program on safer communities is seen as the gold standard the way it now stands. On the other hand, the criminal forfeiture act that was originally contemplated for use by police officers was done differently in other jurisdictions, and we've copied the success of Ontario with respect to The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act in order to make our act workable. All of these measures are based on inputs into new forms of dealing with activity by various provinces, and then the success is copied by other jurisdictions and utilized.

*Ms. Jennifer Howard, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

In the case of criminal property forfeiture, we've now taken the Ontario model, because they've had some success, with a case to Safer Communities. Virtually every province in the country has adopted it, and I'll make the point that B.C. just went through an experience with vehicles, et cetera, that I said, well, we should put onto our Safer Communities, and B.C. said we have to have a Safer Communities program and are taking our program, and we are taking part of their program. Part of this is a learning curve that the provinces are entering into and are exchanging information on. I will get the member information specifically on Spotlight, because I think it's well worth looking at.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I know the former Minister of Justice, the current senior member of Parliament for Manitoba, will take good pride in those words about the act that he introduced. He might not agree on it being unworkable, but I am assured that it was proclaimed before the former government lost power, so I guess that's maybe more of an academic argument. Regardless, I think we can all be glad that whatever parts each government had in bringing it forward, that it's had good success.

Then on the Spotlight program, I'm interested, obviously, in the number of youth who have gone into the program and then, of that number, how many graduated the program, and then how that success is measured. I mean, I appreciate to some extent what the minister is saying, because it is an intensive program with high-risk youth that is measured in a

very short period of time. I'm not opposed to there being a three-month or a six-month measurement out to rate success, but I think it also has to go beyond that.

Is there not sort of a broader look back at the program? I think it's been around for at least two years now. Are there not look-backs two years out at the young people to see if they stay out of gang involvement?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The program is generally—it's interesting, because it's measured in increments. I would compare it to something like a PACT program in health care where it's an ongoing process for a long period of time. We are undertaking an evaluation by an independent party on the program, which is generally standard practice across most government programs.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Who's undertaking the study?

**Mr. Chomiak:** University of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is that report going to be made publicly available?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We haven't got to that point, but I suspect it will be.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I take the minister at his word on that. I think the first experience I had in Estimates in 2003 was with the then-Minister of Conservation, maybe it was the second experience, who, I asked about a report that was being done on the operation of the parks. It was an independent report for \$50,000, and he said he would get me the report after he finished reading it. That was six years ago, and I haven't seen it. So it's either a very in-depth report, or one that just simply wasn't helpful for the minister's program. This minister, I know, is true to his word on these commitments, and so I look forward to seeing that.

But on the issue of Spotlight then, am I right in saying that the initial individuals who have gone into the Spotlight program in 2006, is that right?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The initial response from people that participate in the program and work in the program indicate that it looks favourable and that there's—it appears to be useful often or will graduate from a youth to adult supervision.

Indications from our people on the ground are that it's an effective program. Graduation may not be the word to use. You might want to use integration,

but we'll find out from the University of Winnipeg some of the criteria and we'll adapt it accordingly.

I think, in essence, any intensive program that matches a troubled youth with an array of programs can't help but be a more positive approach than having them confined for a long period of time. So I look at the program as I would look at any other program that provides support to individuals in terms of a success rate.

The specifics will come in time in terms of the actual data, but the initial on the ground review of the information that I've seen is very positive in terms of lesser involvement with criminal type activities on individuals than a non-supportive environment would provide.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the minister. I'm not sure that the word "graduates"—I might have actually got that from a government news release, but regardless that's small arguments at this stage. I'll look forward to seeing how many individuals have gone into the program, how many people have had to leave the program for whatever reason, how many have graduated and how many are continuing on.

I'm interested in the time frames that are being measured. Obviously, I'm sure it's not the day after a person leaves the program that they check to see if they're in a gang. There must be some time frame in between. I'm just curious what that time frame is.

On other programs that have been put into place, the Turnabout program, I think at one point there was a very high success rate noted on the Turnabout program. Are there any recent statistics on the success rate from that program and how success is measured? Again, how far out officials are looking to see if individuals who are under 12 and brought into that program have an interaction with law enforcement that results in a sanction or just any sort of interaction. I don't know how you measure success in the program.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Chomiak:** In general, just to return to the Spotlight program, we have intensive case management and then we have Spotlight from the—from my side of the view, from my view of the information I've seen is the overall success is measured in terms of less interaction with the system, not necessarily totally free of interaction. I, again, compare it to the PACT program, Program for Assertive Community Treatment, used in health, where a program is also wrapped around an

individual. In this case, it'll be, generally, a severely mentally disabled individual, and the success in that program is measured similarly in terms of less direct intervention at the ER or less direct contact or less episodes. To that extent, that's how I've viewed the ongoing approach to Spotlight because, generally, the individuals that enter that program are quite high risk and quite complex in terms of the approach to the case.

Now, with respect to Turnabout, to February this year Turnabout received 1,555 referrals involving 1,066 incidents. That's from the commencement to the end of February. During the year 2008 and 2009, 40 of the children referred to Turnabout returned as repeat referral two or more times.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm a little confused now. So 40 of the 1,550 referrals have been referred back?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes. Why don't we provide the member with a written statement on that, just so that we can jive the figures together, because I am pulling them out of bullet-form notes here and I want to be accurate?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate that. Then on the Spotlight issue, the answer was a bit more nuanced maybe than I was expecting. So the minister is saying that they don't measure success by no further interaction. It's by less interaction. Maybe that's fair. Maybe people might be concerned by that. People would sort of judge for themselves.

I'm interested, I guess, in how many individuals have gone into that program and have had further involvement, regardless of how much it is, regardless if it's less, and maybe that can be broken down. But I'm interested in how many have gone into the program and how many are still having involvement, however the department is measuring that. So if you could just, sort of, determine that. Obviously, you have that information because you refer to it.

On Turnabout, there again, how is its success measured? Is it that they get referred back to Turnabout? If they don't get referred back to Turnabout, then that's considered to be a success?

**Mr. Chomiak:** A small measure of success would be that an individual was referred to Turnabout and was not referred back to Turnabout.

Now, again, returning to Spotlight, the point I was making was my own interpretation of the ongoing development of the program, that some of the favourable reaction was that individuals involved

in the program have not re-involved in gang activity, et cetera, over a particular period of time. That, to me, is a measure of success.

But the member is right. It's a fair comment to make in terms of involvement with a criminal process or not as a measure. That is one measure of success or failure.

But we'll get the data that we have to the member.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate that. So, specifically, then, in Turnabout, if an individual under 12 is referred into that program—the program has been about for a number of years now—has there been a look back over the last five years to sort of get a rearview mirror look at success by looking back five years from individuals who are in the Spotlight program—now they would be captured under the Youth Criminal Justice Act; even with all of its challenges, they would be captured because they've got past 12—to see whether or not they've had involvement in those succeeding years, whether it's a five-year or four-year or three-year time frame?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I don't think we have that specific information with respect to Turnabout. We did do a look back in terms of re-involvement, but we don't have that specific information compiled.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So the look back on re-involvement was re-involvement with Turnabout itself?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, I'll provide a written response to that for the member, just to be precise.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm just looking for that analysis the department did on that look back that the minister referred to in re-involvement.

Project Gang-Proof has been out there for some time, obviously more difficult to measure because it's sort of written material that gets distributed, so I'm not expecting there to be an analytical, numerical assessment of success, but I guess the public might look at it and go, you know, gang activity or, certainly, violence seems to have worsened over the last number of years. Then they look at projects and wonder: Okay, so what value are we getting for the dollars that we're spending? Projects like Project Gang-Proof which I know was well touted by the government, is there any way that the minister can put his finger on the success of that sort of information distribution?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, the overall initiative, as the member indicated, you can't predict, or you can't quantify how many individuals didn't become involved in gang activity or were diverted because of the impact of the program. It's similar to some of the initial discussions I've had with respect to the crystal meth initiative that was undertaken which was a very intensive program. But is there not a major crystal meth problem in Manitoba because we undertook an early intervention program, or did the era pass—did we do enough to—it looks like we've succeeded in preventing a major epidemic of crystal amphetamine breakout in western Canada. All jurisdictions undertook a number of activities. Is that because of the programming we put in place or are there other reasons?

I think we're in discussions with other Justice ministers. They're all very pleased that there doesn't seem to be the same extent of problem that had been anticipated. On the other hand, when talking to some of the workers in the program, I was surprised at how much crack cocaine was a substance abuse problem, and that was a personal revelation of mine. I thought the big problem would be crystal meth, and then I was surprised at how many kids were being admitted with crack cocaine problems.

\* (16:10)

So I was talking about the gang-proofing—obviously there's been an impact. Whether or not it's gone far enough or not, I don't think we can do enough across the board with respect to criminal organizations because I think it is the scourge that we face for a variety of social and economic reasons. I don't think we can do enough.

I think it was interesting that—and I was very pleased with the announcement we had this morning with the Member of Parliament, Shelly Glover, that the initiative on making auto theft an indictable offence, went further and dealt with gang-related issues that dealt with issues of car chop shops, et cetera, which are not a particular problem in Manitoba, but are a huge problem in larger urban centres like Montreal and Vancouver.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

I think that generally I'm really pleased that all of the jurisdictions are aligning themselves to deal with the fundamental issue of gang and criminal organization association versus a whole bunch of other disparate attempts to deal with criminal activities. I think the core issue is gang organization

and the related problems that come out of it whether you're in a large urban centre, whether you're in a rural centre or whether you're on a reserve. It's a problem everywhere. It has different ramifications everywhere. So that's just the long way of getting around to a—that there's not enough we can do to keep people out of criminal organizations across the board.

I appreciate the efforts done in Ottawa with smuggling of—it's stunning to me; it's stunning that most people living in Garden City, living in East Kildonan, living in Steinbach or living in The Maples, would not know that there are millions of people that are kidnapped and smuggled every year. It's extraordinary, and it happens in Canada. So that's a long way of saying that criminal organizations are, in my view, at the root of most of the issues we have to deal with in the criminal justice system.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm glad the member mentioned the work that the Member of Parliament for Kildonan, Joy Smith, is undertaking on the human trafficking issue. She's been recognized nationally and, I think, appropriately.

The minister sort of makes my point by alluding to the crystal meth issue, and I'm glad he did. Certainly, I was one of those who supported the program prior to the information going out. I held a number of community forums in my own community and we couldn't get information on crystal meth. In fact, I had to get the information from justice officials in Minneapolis and then we distributed it here in Manitoba, locally in my own area, but then I was asked to do presentations in other areas.

I'm glad, in fact, that the government decided to sort of get on to that crystal meth issue. Did it prevent more of an explosion of the drug that we've seen in the Midwest of the United States? It's hard to say, but at least you could look at it and go, well, we haven't had the same sort of uptake on the drug and so it certainly could have. It certainly is a possibility, that working collectively, that we were able to tackle that problem.

I think that the point of my questions both on the Spotlight, Turnabout, Gang-Proof, is that I think most Manitobans would say, we haven't had success on the gang issue. So at least on the crystal meth side, an argument could be made that it might have been one of the contributing factors or the contributing factor for preventing that growth of the drug. I don't think anybody would make that argument on the gang side because it just seems that

the problem is getting worse. That doesn't mean that any individual program isn't working. It doesn't mean that any one initiative of the government is failing. It just seems that, as a collective, it's not working.

That is why, I think, it's important that these measurements on these programs are there and what those measurements actually are because I just don't think that if you asked people whether or not they think that the gang problem is getting worse or better, that anybody would say that it's getting better. That's why it's important, I think, to get the measurement side. I'm glad the minister raised the crystal meth side because I think that's the opposite, maybe we could point to that as having been helpful.

I want to ask some questions, I mentioned this yesterday, about the electronic monitoring program, the pilot project the government introduced. I can't remember the date, but I know it was just before the last provincial election so it would have been in the spring of '07. Time goes quickly. It would have been in the spring of '07 that the government announced the electronic monitoring program, and I understood it was supposed to be for a year, then a review would be undertaken. Can the minister just give us an update in terms of where that review is at and when he expects to be able to release that?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Again, it sometimes can become an interesting policy debate. There's a lot of cachet in the public's mind about electronic monitoring. I've always been relatively—I think the department's been relatively conservative on the approach to this issue because of the nature of the technology. We've concluded the first year of the electronic monitoring process, and we're undertaking a second year to work some of the—to ensure the technology's stable.

I have to tell you that, anecdotally, when we were first involved in the project, one of the test cases was one of our officials wearing it 24/7 and monitoring it, and found out that it wouldn't report back from a synagogue. It was based on the—actually, I think it was based on the thickness of the walls. So it's still in the infancy stages, but we had a lot of internal, jocular, weird joking about that. But, overall, we think it's—well, it has been a positive experience. It hasn't achieved its full potential with respect to monitoring location in the community at specific times and dates. We've able to manage that. Indications are positive we can deal with that. It's premature to determine if EM has impacted recidivism, and we're continuing. We're going to look at it for another year in terms of its application.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So then, do I take from the minister's answer that there isn't an evaluation that's going to be coming out this year, as indicated, that it's going to be another year until an evaluation is produced?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister indicate who's going to undertake that review then in a year from now? Will it be an internal review, or is it like Spotlight where an outside group like the University of Manitoba or the University of Winnipeg is going to do the review? Who's going to do that?

**Mr. Chomiak:** I think you could extrapolate that the extent of use will be based on the impact and the effect—I mean, there were some individuals that thought it would be—that suggested it would solve all of the—you know, we go on an extreme, right? I mean, some individuals saw it on that Sunday night TV show—*[interjection]* No. With all the—on that street. *[interjection]* *Desperate Housewives*. That's what it was. Because it was on *Desperate Housewives*, it was perceived as—*[interjection]* The member is asking, did he die? You know, I don't know.

\* (16:20)

But it's still under evaluation, and the fact that it's under evaluation, I think, suggests that, while the experience has been positive, there are matters to be worked out. Like all technology, if it was an answer in itself, we'd probably be immediately expanding utilization. However, we want to be very cautious in terms of the overall operation and the overall implications of utilizing it. So another year of work to deal with some of the bugs, if I can put it that way, and we'll see from there.

But it will be done internally by our officials based on their ability to—*[interjection]* Well, no, in fact, I think that bug has been worked out. But I think it's useful. It's part of the toolkit, but we're still honing the tool.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I, for one, see that as positive. I don't want to put words in the mouth of the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), but I think both of us were on the case, so to speak, for some time. I know that there was resistance from previous ministers and, to some extent, from the current minister, who wasn't overly optimistic when it started. I think I remember, actually, being on CBC and debating this issue with a professor from Saskatchewan, who was quite negative about it. So now I've got to go back on CBC

and try to drive home this point. I'm glad, actually, that it's going forward.

I remember reading in one of the newspapers—it was probably the *Free Press*—about one of the Crown prosecutors, who said that it was positive. It was in relation to an auto theft case and, he or she, the Crown prosecutor, was saying that the monitoring seemed to have made a difference in this individual. So I think that's positive.

I also think it's important to remember—and I'm going to ask the minister if this is one of the parts of the analysis—that it's not simply whether or not an individual doesn't re-offend. I always thought that there was value in the electronic monitoring, because even if somebody is attempting to cut it off, or does cut it off—and that's often what gets public attention, when it gets cut off, and then they point to that as being a failure of the program—at least the breach is being registered and you can bring them back into the system, whereas before, they might be committing crimes, and you never really knew. But where the breach is then registered, at least that has some positive impact because it brings them back into the system and maybe consequences can flow from that.

So is that sort of part of the analysis, too, not just a straight how many people keep the bracelet on and how many don't but whether or not it helps in determining whether or not somebody's breaching their own orders?

**Mr. Chomiak:** In fact, the member makes the point about the individual application of a particular technology. In fact, in some cases, it aids us in terms of the actual monitoring because we have the cellphone. If there's no contact or loss of contact, there's contact by cellphone. There might be suggestions that you better not leave that area or else you will be breached. So it cuts a couple of different ways.

Whether it's health care or whether it's justice, my experience in technology is one of cautious optimism in the application of technology. No matter where you are in the system, you can never substitute the human element. You can never substitute a machine for a nurse or a video conference call for an actual face-to-face interaction. You can't duplicate that.

When you're into the issue of actually having people evaluate and attend at someone's home or have them just monitored, that may be an important

measure, but the probation officer coming to the home and finding out that there's a family disturbance going on and that it's causing a lot of angst to the individual in the home may provide a lot more information than knowing that that kid is sitting in the home at the time that that occurs.

So what I'm generally saying is that it's a useful part. We're going to continue to work on it, but, ultimately, at the end of the day, no matter whether chips get implanted in everybody or not, which is a whole other issue—my dog has a chip—my dog has a chip. That's amazing, but there's no substitute for a kid being able to talk to a parent, a peer or an elder, and that's the most important thing. After that we get into the social service system, the criminal system, et cetera. At all those points an intervention by another human being may have a significant impact.

So we like the technology. We're going to continue to use the technology. It's not totally proven and we're going to continue to work with it within our system.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, generally I think that that's positive. I do think it's a marked change from what we were hearing from this, and certainly previous ministers, in the past where I would have described it not as cautious optimism, but over pessimism about the program. But I'm glad that it doesn't matter. Sort of where it started I'm glad it's getting to a point where it's getting more acceptance.

So the current technology that's being used, it's GPS monitoring so we know—my friend from Inkster refers to certain technology being Martha Stewart technology. I think there's passive monitoring where you can tell where somebody isn't and then there's GPS when you can tell where somebody is. Is that the only technology that's being used, the GPS system, right now?

**Mr. Chomiak:** It's GPS real time up to three minutes, every three-minute notification of where the individual is at and where the individual should not be at.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate that. So, in the analysis that will happen in a year, maybe the analysis will happen sooner, is there also an exploration about going to other sorts of offenders, and can we say that the seemingly positive experience that we're having right now on high risk auto thieves, because I think that's all it's being used on now, could also be used on sex offenders or different sorts of offenders who all of us, I think, would agree, you know, wish if

they're at that risk wouldn't be released, but I mean there are lots of realities that we deal with.

So is that analysis going to look at whether or not the technology can be used on other offenders as well?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We're going to look at it through its reliability and its effectiveness on the population we're looking at and then look at possible extension. The worst case, the nightmare scenario is the headline in the British paper about the sex offender who was on EM and ended up murdering someone. That's the nightmare scenario and that's a fact and that's something that always is often I think—is one of one's worst nightmares when utilizing any kind of technology like this.

We will look at the effectiveness based on the population we're dealing with and we'll make a decision on the evaluation of the quality based on that effectiveness.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate that and certainly we know—and I don't think I've ever suggested that any technology would be foolproof and that they would eliminate the ability for somebody to commit a crime. I think we know that if there's a motivated offender that those crimes could happen. I think that the issue is about how can we reduce the crime and reduce the motivation, reduce the likelihood of that. So if this can make a significant or measurable difference, then I think that that's positive and I'm glad—and I am, I'm glad that the department is going to continue on with it for a year.

My friend from Inkster is a chomping at the bit to ask a question or two, so I'm just going to turn it over.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Thank you to the Member for Steinbach.

Madam Chair, I think that the Department of Justice, and with all due respect, is missing a very valuable component to ankle bracelets. If we just focus our attention on GPS, it is one of the more costly adventures in terms of ankle bracelets. I make reference to the Martha Stewart special because Martha Stewart is the one that somewhat made it famous, and that's where you have this home beacon, and you turn the knob that says you can be 25 feet, 50 feet or whatever it might be, away from that particular beacon, and if you exceed that, well then, it's recorded within that beacon and your probation

officer then can get a report as to if that person was in violation.

I always thought that that technology was really important and, I suspect, a whole lot more cost-efficient. What people need to be aware of, as I'm sure everyone is, is that ankle bracelets do not prevent crimes from occurring, per se. If someone's going to cause harm, whether personal or property, they're going to likely do it, whether they have the ankle bracelet or not. I see the Martha Stewart bracelet as something that could be used, in particular, to ensure curfews. I would have thought that expanding in that area would, in fact, be cost-efficient and, in the long run, be a very valuable tool, in particular for probations and probation services or our court system, and would ask why the government wouldn't be looking into that aspect of ankle bracelets and just focussing their attention on GPS.

**Mr. Chomiak:** It's like saying that a bait car is going to solve your auto theft problem. Martha Stewart I'm not worried about. I'm not worried that Martha Stewart's going to offend me or anyone else. The key issue is contact. If Martha Stewart were to go out beyond her 25-foot range, someone would have to be contacted, a probation officer or a police officer, et cetera. So, generally, there still has to be a response in the system, a human response in the system to whatever violation takes place.

So, you know, the Martha Stewarts of the world aren't the ones that we're really worried about re-offending because I don't think Martha Stewart will re-offend. When you get into the more serious issues of whether a person should be confined, whether a person should be monitored on a regular basis, it's much more complex than someone who's responsible for tax evasion is given a conditional house arrest, or whatever category you apply. It would be great if the technology would be such that it would perhaps reduce incarceration costs, et cetera, but I don't think it's as simple as that.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, this will be my last question I have on the issue. I would ask if the minister could make a commitment in terms of looking into what it would actual cost to have 20 or 30 of these devices, and then make them available to probations or to our courts, just on a trial basis. I think that we're underestimating the potential role that this plays. There are a number of individuals that are out there on curfew, or one could say even house arrest, that would benefit more by this technology, or that we would benefit more by using this technology

than we would even with the GPS, and the GPS is, in fact, more costly.

I don't see how it harms the taxpayer to find out what would be the cost difference of having this type of technology where you have the home beacon and then you can easily find out whether or not the person is in violation of the curfew. Again, you know, this type of technology does not prevent a crime from occurring, but nor does GPS guarantee a crime is not going to occur.

I just think that we're overlooking a very important component. Other jurisdictions have accepted it, and, at the very least, give me a glimmer of hope by saying that we'll look at it from an administrative point of view, to see if, in fact, it is viable, maybe even talk to a couple of the probation officers and see if they feel that there's value to this type of a program, which is fairly cost-efficient, especially if you compare it, from what I understand, what I've been told—I've met with people in Ontario in regard to the issue, and I'm told that it is fairly cost-efficient in comparison to GPS. I just think that we're overlooking an important point here.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, I'll consider the member's comments.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for his questions. Just finishing off a bit on this technology, curfew checks and monitoring offenders and that, a couple of years ago, the department I think had begun a program where they would have automated calling going to those who are on curfews, and then I think the way the system worked is you identify yourself or press one, or something, if you're at home.

Can they just give an update on how that is working, if it's ongoing in the department.

**Mr. Chomiak:** It's an ongoing program that's used with low-risk people who are on conditional sentences. It's still operating.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So how many individuals would qualify, that low-risk conditional sentence?

**Mr. Chomiak:** We'll provide the member with the—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister also at that time, then, provide the number of individuals who are serving conditional sentences, I guess currently, and in 2008 and 2007?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the minister for that. I don't have any more questions on electronic monitoring or the technology around it. I'd like to go and talk about the courts a bit. We won't finish, I don't think, this topic today.

Then, tomorrow, if we could sort of move to Prosecutions, policing and then maybe some specific issues around crime like violence and maintenance enforcement, maybe the status of legislation. So there are a lot of different things to cover yet.

But on the issue of the courts, what's the most recent annual report that the Provincial Court has put out?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Apparently, I'll be tabling one shortly for '07-08.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So, within this session, within the week or—I don't want to hone you in too much, but where would that fall in? What is shortly described as?

**Mr. Chomiak:** It'll certainly be before the end of session.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Okay, I appreciate that. I know at one point there was a problem with getting the annual report. I don't remember what the issue was. It sort of went on and on, and there was just a challenge. There was a backlog of the annual report for a year and more, I think. But I'm just glad that we'll be looking forward to the new annual report soon.

Can the minister indicate if there are any vacancies on the provincially appointed judges currently?

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Chomiak:** There's an ongoing competition, as we speak, for one position.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Then, that's going through the normal process of the nominee committee that the Minister of Justice has—just refresh my memory. Who are the members of the nominee committee?

**Mr. Chomiak:** The Chief Justice, a member of the Law Society, a member of the Bar Association, a member of the Provincial Court and then three individuals appointed by the minister.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Some of those the names I know, but could the minister just provide the names of the individuals, then, who are on that committee?



**Mr. Chomiak:** Oh, it's a changing committee; sometimes individuals stay on, sometimes they come off and new individuals are put on. So the three citizen representatives change. I could provide you with a list of the members of the last few committees.

**Mr. Goertzen:** That's great. If I could just get, then, the current committee and then the last four or five, that's fine, just to see who has undertaken that important task.

I think I know the answer to this question. So any chance that the minister is going to bring the nominee to a committee for a respectful dialogue and discussions prior to the appointment to the bench?

**Mr. Chomiak:** As I've said, the member anticipated my response. I've said publicly that the present process that was put in place by the former government, that we're following, I think, has been very useful and very effective, and continues to be useful and effective.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I don't entirely disagree with the comments by the minister. But I don't think you don't stop trying to make things more effective and more responsive and, certainly, that's something I think that should be considered—to not denigrate or to make light of the current process just to make it better.

A question regarding supernumerary relief judges, I think, is the term that the Chief Justice is using. Are there any relief judges or supernumerary judges currently on the Provincial Court?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The minister knows, because I know representations have been made to him in the past, that this is one of the reasons—some feel this is one of the reasons that the court seems to have issues with delay and there are other reasons, obviously, but if there aren't those relief judges—and I think that the Chief Justice has said that having relief judges would make the process go better. They wouldn't have to close courtrooms at certain times for the absence of judges, that these relief judges are part-time judges and would make it more effective and speed trials and judicial matters up.

Is there a reason why there are not relief judges currently? I don't want to say that the minister is reluctant or resistant, but we don't have them at this point, so there must be some reason.

**Mr. Chomiak:** The Chief Justice—the Chief Judge has made it clear that the preference of the court would be to have supernumerary judges. There is a valid argument, I think, in favour of that. I suppose there's compelling arguments on the other side with respect to cost effectiveness, et cetera, of just appointing more judges, for example, or more flexibility.

I think the best way to describe it is that—and it's always difficult doing—it's receiving ongoing consideration.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I'm glad it's under consideration. I guess I'm just more curious in terms of how do you reach a point where you make the decision then?

So there's concerns from the minister regarding cost effectiveness. Has he sort of done an analysis of what other jurisdictions have done and then seen a negative cost effectiveness result from those jurisdictions? Is that sort of the resistance?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No. I think it's a question of weighing the benefits versus the disadvantages. I think, in terms of flexibility, one could argue that it provides flexibility on the fact that it's on a part-time basis. On the other hand, you lose the flexibility of having a full-time person. So in terms of the overall balance, it continues to be under consideration.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister sort of give a better indication of when that consideration will come to a conclusion and come to a decision, in terms of whether or not to move to at least some relief judges?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No, I don't have a specific time frame to indicate to the member. It just continues to be one of the considerations of many with respect to how to make the system more effective and functioning. Although, I have to admit that some of the changes brought in by the current Chief Judge have been, well, recognized by the UN; the Front End Project has been overwhelming success. The idea of supernumerated judges, which are utilized at the federal level, I'm aware of, and at other levels of the court, continue to be under consideration.

**Mr. Goertzen:** A couple years ago there was a change in terms of the appointment of then-known as justices of the peace, and they are now judicial justices of the peace, and there's three different layers or three different levels. Just in terms of the judicial

justices of the peace, how many are there currently in the province?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Chairperson, there are 20 judicial justices of the peace in the province.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I know in the past, it was some time ago, that I saw a release that had the listing of the names of them. Could the minister just provide my office the updated list of individuals filling those 20 positions?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Have there been any changes in terms of the requirements or the qualifications that an individual needs to have to become a judicial justice of the peace?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And so some of the tasks of the judicial justices were, I think, tested; bail hearings, issuing of warrants, those sorts of higher-end activities, I suppose. Has that proved to be successful in terms of moving things along or providing accessibility to those issues? I mean, the changes were made for a reason, I know, and we had long discussions, I think, with the former minister, about the changes. But has the experience been that having this level of service made the system run more effectively?

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Part of the rationale behind the change in structure was because of a judicial independence and the need to apply that. In terms of functioning of the system, I don't think there's been any significant problem that's occurred.

**Mr. Goertzen:** In terms of the average time for trials—and this is something that gets discussed, the minister mentioned the Front End Project and has mentioned it before and I know the Chief Justice has mentioned it in previous annual reports. At one time, the department provided information in terms of the number of trials that were outstanding, from charge, based on one year, two years or three years out, so those that had waited longer than three years for a conclusion from the charge date. Is that information still kept by the department?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, the information that I'm generally familiar with is when the trial dates are available. In those cases—I can provide the member that information.

I'll check, and we'll check, what information's available. The information that's generally provided to me on a briefing basis is when trial dates are available in the various areas of the court, which is, for me, always a significant issue, and I think for everyone a significant issue, as to when trial dates are available, because that suggests an ability for the system to go forward. Of course, it becomes a matter of when defence dates are available and when schedules conflict, et cetera, but for me always the crucial date has always been, you know, do we have trial dates available for people in custody, people out of custody, for those kinds of matters, and I'll provide that information to the member.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate that, and that's not unhelpful. What I'm specifically looking for, though, is the number of individuals who have waited more than a year to go to trial on a criminal matter, more than two years, or possibly more than three years. I know the information was kept at one time so, unless it's stopped, or not being kept any longer, that's just what I'm looking for.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I have the director of Courts and the former director of Courts beside me. It's never easy in—because of Queen's Bench and because of provincial court and because of related matters, the controlled substances act, sometimes data isn't as available as one might expect because of the complexity or the non-integrated nature of—and the integrated nature of some of the matters as they appear before the courts. To the extent that we have information that's available, I'll try to provide it to the member.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I will take that as an answer, except I'll take out the try, and hope that the information comes forward to the extent that you have it.

The issue of cameras in courts has gone on for a while. I know the minister made public comment that he believes the time has come. It was quite some time ago that the Chief Justice indicated that they would have a working group that would be looking at it. Could you just provide an update on where that is at?

**Mr. Chomiak:** There is a working group that is continuing to work at it, and I remain positive on the experience. I'll await the recommendation from the working group.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I don't mean to oversimplify things, because I think that sometimes things are more complicated than they appear, and I'm not suggesting

that somebody can go to Best Buy and hang up a camera and start broadcasting. But I do know Ontario has gone through this experience on the Court of Appeal and so there are some models, I guess, to look at. Is there any indication of what the challenge has been on moving this forward? I mean, I know there are privacy issues and that that's not unimportant, and you have to determine the kind of trials that would be acceptable, and I get that too. It just seems like a really long time for an issue that doesn't seem to be weighted down by technology.

**Mr. Chomiak:** In general, it's not a significant issue at Supreme Court or Court of Appeal. Why anyone other than the member and myself and others who are trained in law would want to watch it is another question. I admit to watching CPAC, but the issue is trial court where you have witnesses, where you have a member of the public coming forward, and that's where it gets more complicated.

It does seem ironic that the initial system was set up so that it's all public and it's within the public jurisdiction, and everything is done publicly. Then it's difficult to introduce the technology that, in fact, provides this information publicly. It's sometimes difficult to understand why there couldn't be a direct leap into the modern media. The media are there and report. Still in Canada they can sketch. We have the Internet. We have issues of evidence. We have issues of privacy. Sometimes it's actually a lot more complicated than it looks on the surface.

I think what will happen is that we'll see some kind of technological changes in the court and the court application system. Actually, we could probably talk for hours about this. I'll just leave it at that.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Right, and I mean I didn't sort of expect the minister to have a bigger answer. I'm sure that if he had the report he wouldn't provide it to me now. It would be something more formal, and I understand that. But we've been raising this issue for a couple of years, and I just think it's something, to echo the words of the minister, whose time has come and probably whose time has passed in some regards, and so we need to move that forward.

On the issue of the drug court, I talked about this yesterday about asking the questions about the number of people who have graduated from the drug court. I'm also interested in the number of people who are enrolled. The difference, obviously, would be the people who didn't adhere to the conditions of

the drug court and would have gone back then into the main justice system.

Can the minister just indicate either since its inception or in any other form I suppose, how many individuals have graduated from drug court versus how many went into the drug court program?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, the court was established in 2005-2006. As of February 9, there were 30 participants in the court, 13 graduates. Participants are a high-risk group and, as a result, one can expect higher than normal failure rates. The federal funding for the project ends in 2010, and the Province will have to make a decision as to the continuation of the court.

Current with that, I think, is the success of the community prosecutor that we have, the future of mental health court and the future of experiences in community courts across North America on the functioning of where we go forward. In other words, this is one of many measures dealing with a variety of issues that we're looking at.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Sorry, I missed the numbers—33 individuals have since its inception gone into drug court. Is that right?

**Mr. Chomiak:** No, as of February 9, there are 30 participants in the court and 13 graduates. In terms of historical data, to graduate, a client must work through group and individual counselling and spend 12 to 18 months in the program, have a minimum of four months of abstinence from drugs, be working, attending or volunteering regularly, in a community support group—90 percent of the referrals have had prior criminal history. On average, the participants have had 10 years of heavy drug use. I'll try to get historical numbers to the member.

**Madam Chairperson:** Order. The time being 5 o'clock, committee rise.

## AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL INITIATIVES

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Chair, in regard to where we left off yesterday, we were talking about the bilateral Canada-Manitoba agreement and contributions. The minister was about to explain to me the funding in regard to how the criteria would be set up and the objectives that were going to be in as far as administering the money in regard to the particular program of the industry or business development. We were talking about Aboriginal people, young farmers, new Canadians and women as immigrants into this province.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Chairman, the member is referring to the business development sector program. As I indicated yesterday, this is to help with business management skills and capacity building of individuals in managing of farms and agrifood processing businesses. It has targeted the clients, including farm and post-farm business managers, and we're looking to ensure that Aboriginal people, young farmers, youth and new Canadians and farm women are involved in it.

In comparison to the other program, the one previous to this one, there will be more individual attention paid to the individual. So there'll be an assessment, and then programming will be developed accordingly. It will be administered by the Province, and our staff will work more closely with the individuals.

**Mr. Eichler:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for that answer. I am wanting to go back to the process in regard to the federal government's contribution, not only monetarily, but my understanding is, and correct me if I'm wrong, is that the program, once it's developed, then goes back to the federal government before the program can actually be rolled out, or does the Province have the authority to develop the program and send the bill in, or is there another process that needs to be followed?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If the member is asking if we have to go through a new approval process, no. There have been broad conditions and terms that have been negotiated, so that there is flexibility within those conditions, so the Province can work on developing programming, but there is also a management committee that will review.

So is a program going to be developed and then have to be sent back to the federal government for review? No, it will not. But perhaps I could provide a—no, I'll let the member go. I was going to provide a

little more information, but I'll let you ask the question.

**Mr. Eichler:** Best thing to do is keep me guessing. That's what makes the opposition a little better all the time. Don't give them too much information at once.

In regard to that, I know that we do want to have as many programs developed in a way that's going to help all Manitobans and, in fact, to encourage all sectors to get involved within the agricultural programs. Yesterday, the minister started talking about succession climbing with the young farmers, and maybe that was part of the business development plan that she was talking about.

This is such an important issue for me, and as I look especially at the times now of where the average farm age is getting right up there—I believe it's either 62, something like that, I'm not exactly sure. I'm sure the minister will probably tell me in her answer, but I'm very concerned about a succession plan and what type of workshops, planning programs and that type of initiatives that will be brought about, or will it be through another host of programs other than through this Canada-Manitoba bilateral agreement?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Indeed, Mr. Chair, this is an issue that is very important and one that we have recognized for some time now, and that's why we put in place the Bridging Generations, a succession-planning initiative to help with the transfer of farm operations from one generation to another. In fact, we have now expanded that to other rural businesses to enable them to transfer their business.

But, under this section, there is a business development education program, and this program will provide financing to hold events and workshops and develop resource management to enhance the knowledge and the use of business management practices for farmers on issues, on agri-product processing with emphasis on young farmers, Aboriginal farmers, new entrants, new Canadians, women into farming, and agri-product processing businesses. As well, Mr. Chair, under the Succeeding Generations initiative, this program assists young and beginning farmers to develop and manage viable farm operations while addressing the needs of the retiring producer.

So it complements what we have previously done and builds on that. Mr. Chairperson, the program includes programs and services to assist young, rural entrepreneurs, and the program provides

assistance through mentoring programs, the Bridging Generations Initiative.

We also publish a Young Farmers newsletter and a Young Farm Women's Training Program and young rural and Aboriginal entrepreneur programs.

We talk about farmers and sometimes people forget about the number of women that are involved in the agriculture industry. The Young Farm Women's Training Program has provided 197 farm women with farm knowledge and skills through six different projects. There's definitely a recognition that there are skills and development needed for women in the industry. We just have to look at the size of some people or the strength of women versus men, and we know we have to do things in a different way. It can be done, but by using these workshops, it has been very worthwhile in helping young women who are in the industry.

**Mr. Eichler:** I have to concur with the minister. In fact, she must have been reading my mind as to what my next question was going to go was on the women's side of things and ESP something. I don't know. But, in regard to that, 197 women, that's a substantial number of help that's been out there for the women to take advantage of a program such as this. Mr. Chair, I know I've had several in my area and had calls from other areas where they were very pleased with the fact that they were able to take advantage of some of these management courses and programming that would allow them to have their business grow and prosper

A lot of it starts off with just an idea and then, as we all know, that's how most businesses start. I know I was a member of that particular era, and started off with just doing a little bit of business in my backyard and turned it into a fairly successful business. Anything we can do to see that grow and prosper with the agriculture sector, I think we certainly need to do that.

Would the minister or her staff align for us any new initiatives, other than what's been developed in the past or is it a repeat of what we've seen in the past four or five years of operation of that particular project?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There's no doubt there's been a lot of work done, and there have been programs out there that have developed a certain level of skill. We want to build on those, and that's what is happening here through the Canada-Manitoba agriculture skills assessment program. The program will provide

financial assistance to people to train and take training that will increase their on-farm and value added business profitability, improve on-farm and value added practices and meet market and consumer demand. Ultimately, if you are going into some business, it's the consumer demand you have to meet. If you aren't meeting the consumer demand, it isn't going to be a very successful plan.

There are two key differences between the CASS program and this one. That is that the training skills will be focussed specifically on farm and agri-product processing skills, and the other difference I mentioned to the member yesterday is in the previous program, we had hired a third party to deliver the program. This time, the training will be delivered through MAFRI.

**Mr. Eichler:** That triggered another question in regard to the CASS program then. That was a subcontract between the provincial and federal government, so those people will no longer be administering any of those programs. Is that my understanding?

\*(15:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The program was delivered by Education and Training. They subcontracted at the Parkland foundation, and it was a very good program. They did a good job, but we have now decided, through these negotiations with the federal government, to change the focus to be very specific on farm and agri-food processing skills, where, under the previous program, there was training that could have been accessed. So this time we are delivering it through our staff.

**Mr. Eichler:** Actually, I have to agree that the Province would know best what's out there that needs to be highlighted, and certainly encourage the minister and staff to work with industry, which I'm sure she does, and her staff, on an ongoing basis.

But, having said that, I know that there are a number of needs that are out there as well and we can't meet them all. But what better way than the federal government to help the Province out by letting the Province make that decision where those priorities need to be as far as these particular programs are, in fact, to be developed, and how they're going to be developed, which would move me on, unless the minister wants to respond to that, to the Northern Agriculture Initiative. I know at the—I believe it's the Taste of Manitoba, I think that's maybe the one that's called, in regard to developing

more agriculture initiatives within the northern agriculture. Are there any changes as a result of those programs? I know that there's, again, over a four-year period, \$1.6 million outlaid by the federal government. Are there any new programs that will be initiatives put forward by the provincial government on this particular initiative?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** In this particular section, the member is right, the total investment is \$1.6 million. Of that, \$0.6 million is federal investment and \$1 million is the provincial investment. We have worked very hard on developing systems, and we want to expand and increase the volume, and value-add to the agri-food products in our northern region. We want to see people move beyond providing for their own needs, to moving towards where they are able to provide for the community. There is a lot of good food, but we want to work with people who have ideas and look at how we can move forward with developing products, testing products, implementing new products and looking at market systems so that some of these northern foods can make it beyond the kitchen table and in to supply a community and, in fact, hopefully, beyond that.

**Mr. Eichler:** Just to take it a step farther. As far as the private sector, are there any partnerships or talks in regard to forming partnerships in order to help those products that are not acclimatized to do quite as well in those areas? And the soil conditions, of course, are not near the same as what they are in other parts of the province.

I guess the last part of that, the projects that would be put in place to help them to be able to store this food. Again, one thing to grow it, another thing to be able to store it and keep it. So, actually, it's a three-part question, Mr. Chair.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member opposite will know that we have done quite a bit of work with food production in the north. Between MAFRI, between ANA, we've done work with helping to start gardening programs. Frontier School Division is very involved in it, looking at greenhouses in communities, looking at gardening projects. We have done a lot of work on that. Now, this will build, and under those programs we've had previously, it was about growing products. In fact, the issue of storage and being able to use a deep freeze properly and those kinds of things are very, very important.

So the Northern Agriculture Initiative will support the development of northern agriculture systems with the objective of increasing the volume

and value of agrifood products in the northern region. It's in our intent, and the funds will be provided to support initiatives that contribute to the increased production of nutritional foods by northern producers. Potential activities under this initiative include agricultural extension support for remote communities; the development, testing and implementation of new production; and marketing systems that make northern food production more accessible to various markets.

So it's building on the work that we have been doing over the past several years, of getting people to start producing and storing their own food. It's our goal here, to see where we can take it to the next level, where you're not only growing food for yourself, but you might be able to supply your community, or you might be able to move to the next level of commercialization of a product.

Mr. Chair, with regard to the question about partnerships that the member raised, this is at the very early stages and we are not at the stage where partnerships can be developed. But I'm sure as we move forward on this initiative we will see the opportunity for partnerships.

**Mr. Eichler:** Just before I do leave this particular line of Estimates, again, I want to make sure I'm very clear on the numbers here. Yesterday, we had, roughly, in the minister's words, \$14 million a year coming in from the federal government over this four-year program. Now, that's different on this particular one. Is that the only one that's different because the provincial dollars, there's 1.6? Yesterday my understanding was that this was all federal dollars, and then the Province was kicking in 40 percent over and above that, except for this one seems to be a bit different, just for clarification, Madam Minister, through you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I'll take the opportunity to clarify because there are some differences. There are a couple of areas under the program in the competitive and innovations sector, and the member yesterday talked about the \$26.9 million. Of that \$26.9 million, 12.1 are federal dollars and 14.8 are provincial dollars. So that part is the Strategic Innovation Fund for \$26.9 million.

Then we go to the Industry Innovation Fund, and that's a total investment of \$12.3 million, and of that 7.4 is federal and 4.9 is provincial.

Then we go to business development, and under business development there's a total investment of

\$4.5 million, and under that one, 4 million is federal and 0.5 million is provincial.

Then, on the sector that we just talked about, on the Northern Agriculture Initiative, it's 1.6 million, and it's 0.6 of federal money and 1 million of provincial.

Now, if we go to the second sector, and it's a sector that contributes to social priorities and is proactive in managing risk. In that section, the Manitoba Food Safety Risk Management Suite: Implementing Food Safety Systems, in that sector there's 15.7 million, and of that 12.5 is federal and 3.2 is provincial.

\*(15:10)

On the environmental action, the program component is to improve environmental performance and sustainability of agriculture operations. That's 18.8 million, and, of that, 10.8 are federal dollars and 8 are provincial dollars.

Then, on environmental information. The purpose of this program is to support the provision of environmental information that supports decision making and improves the sustainability of agriculture. There is a total of \$11 million in this pillar. So it's 3.9 from the federal government, 7.1 from the provincial government. Now, if you total that all up, and the member will say your numbers don't add up, because that comes up to a total of 90.8, but there were some adjustments that had to be made. The federal government delivers some programs by themselves and that's 9.7 million, and, as you know, we just signed the agreement, but we had a continuity year last year; we were carrying over the previous agreement. For the '08-09, the feds put in 9.5 and we put in 7.5. So the total federal—although the subtotal that we gave earlier is 90.8, the grand total, when you add in the fed program and the continuity period, it will be a total of \$117.5 million.

So the federal contribution is \$70.5, and the provincial contribution is \$47 million. I will provide that information for the member in writing later.

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the minister and her staff for that because I certainly didn't leave yesterday with the understanding that the federal government was kicking in this much money. Now, I do have a clear understanding of it, so I thank the minister and her staff for that. I would appreciate it in writing. It certainly would be very helpful as the minister knows, her staff knows, you know, even though we are opposition, we need a clear understanding of how

it works in order to ensure how the programs work so we can help those people in need and refer them to the right people and how much money's actually available.

So, on the food safety, then, as I know the minister's introducing a bill in regard to that, and we have, again, some money that's coming in from the federal government. A larger portion of the funding's coming from the federal on this. Now, will this be used mainly for the biosecurity and traceability, or is there other initiatives there that has not been talked about in the brief outline that explains how the risk management suite would be on food safety?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** This program provides resources toward establishing and implementing the food safety, both on-farm and post-farm, as well as biosecurity and traceability. So the purpose of the program is to increase awareness and adoption of food-safety practices, biosecurity practices and tracing initiatives. So there are three parts to it. Some of it will be outreach work, which our extension staff will do to engage business and increase the adoption of food safety practices. Enabling activities will include promoting the adoption of on-farm and post-farm food safety practices and developing outreach, making people aware.

The second part will be some direct financial support. This will be to help the processors, the companies meet their HACCP standards. Finally, there will be a certain amount of money that will go for research and development. It's all to deal with food safety activities and my department will engage in activities to deliver extension programs to associates, stakeholders, assessing the needs of each sector and sub-sector for the purpose of designing programs and delivery of these programs.

So it's a broad range. Definitely it's related to food safety. We know that this is a priority for the consumer. We want to see that we are implementing it properly on the farm and post-farm. Our staff will be involved with developing these programs and there will be help for people to meet their HACCP and ISO 22000 standards.

**Mr. Eichler:** The minister talked on HACCP and I'm fairly familiar with it. I certainly understand how it works. One of our family members is involved with HACCP in one of their operations and certainly recognized worldwide as a result of that.

I would like to just ask the minister or staff, what steps or initiatives—and I know that she talked about

part of that through here—are we taking to trying to ensure that rather than go through some of the other formalities— and we know there are lots of business models out there—but what are we trying to do to encourage more businesses through either programming, through other steps, in order to ensure that HACCP is the program that needs to be out there, so that others that don't have the opportunity to understand it, certainly know that it is the program they need, in order to be worldwide, when it comes to marketing those particular products—that are being made from the gate to the plate—out to some of those other countries that I think we desperately need to get into. That step would be through HACCP, in my opinion, Madam Minister.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member talks about HACCP, and it, indeed, is a very important standard that we want our businesses to follow. That's why we are working with commodity organizations to develop on-farm food safety programs that meet auditable standards for bio-security, disease control and animal welfare. There are 21 commodity organizations that have developed food safety programs based on the HACCP principles and the Province has participated in all 15 technical reviews since the federal-provincial government started the review of the industry, developing on-farm food safety. We continue to work with CFIA and other provincial and territorial governments, and industry, on the further development of a national, on-farm food safety recognition program. As well, there is the food safety initiative and Manitoba has implemented a HACCP based food safety programs in a non-federal registry which are otherwise, in the provincial plants, that don't have federal registry. We have implemented a HACCP-based safety program so that the provincial plants meet a high standard as well.

There are three levels of certification being recognized. Level 1 is the good manufacturing practice, which is a provincially recognized standard. Level 2 is HACCP Advantage, which is another provincially recognized standard. Level 3 is an international recognition standard, which is the ISO 22000. The program started in the spring of 2006, and, as of March 1, 2009, 53 processors have applied for funding and 51 have signed a contribution agreement with Manitoba. So it is a very successful program. We've got 53 processors that have applied for funding, but our goal is to have all plants in Manitoba at HACCP standards by 2013.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Eichler:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for those. Out of the 53, are there holdbacks, or what would be the criteria where some company or an individual applying to that funding not be eligible? Are there any blocks there that come as a result once they establish HACCP, or is it pretty well pre-approved?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** What the people have to do that are proposing a plan is ensure that they have enough resources to implement the plan. Once they've shown that they have enough resources there, then it's quite simple, as the member says. It's not a rubber stamp. There are things that they have to do, and one of them is that they are fully committed to implementing the plan.

**Mr. Eichler:** From my past personal experience, I certainly found it to be that way. I just wanted to, you know, confirm that. Thank you, Madam Minister.

Just before I do leave that, the minister talked about 2013. When we're looking at CentrePort becoming so viable and such an important sector to Manitoba's economy, the time lines that we look at, when a company looks to coming into Manitoba, do we see any or anticipate any ways of moving from one company to another, from another province to Manitoba, as a result and come into CentrePort, or are there any roadblocks that might be coming up as a result of HACCP or those changes from one province to another that the minister would care to highlight on?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Because these are universal standards—they're international—I do not see any difficulty with a company moving from one province to another. Certainly, with CentrePort, we're very hopeful that we will see some movement and more processing here.

But I do not see any difficulty if they were meeting HACCP standards in another province. So they would implement their HACCP standards here and they should be able to move forward.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm just about ready to wrap up on this particular piece here, but I just want to follow up with where FSAM follows through on all this. My understanding, then, is—and the minister and her staff can correct me if I'm wrong—that FSAM will now be totally run and managed out of the provincial government's programs.

How much money will be allocated to FSAM, and how will it be rolled out as far as their plan is concerned?



**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, I think the member is talking about the environmental farm plans.

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The environmental farm plans, the process that we are adopting now is that staff in my department will be doing the work on developing the environmental farm plans.

Then, when they do that, and those plans are developed, then the producer can access funds based on their BMPs, and, for those BMPs, there's about, give or take, a budget around \$2 million a year. That's still being negotiated on exactly how much we will have each year for business risk management.

If the member is talking specifically about the role of FSAM, FSAM was involved with the development of environmental farm plans, and we want to make the best use of this money and get as much money into farmers' hands. That's why we have decided that we will do the work in-house, so to speak, with our staff doing the work, which is in line with what other provinces are doing.

FSAM will have an advisory role on environmental issues and environmental farm plans, but they will not be involved in the delivery of the program because we think it's more efficient and gives us more dollars that can be used directly for farmers.

**Mr. Eichler:** Again, for clarification then, so the FSAM office is actually located in the stockyards. What role will they be playing with regard to FSAM, really just as an advisement or past knowledge of what has happened with some of those programs, or how will that actually roll out?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** It will definitely be an advisory role that they will play, and we've asked them to come back to us with a proposal for what they see as a role that they can play. It will not be in delivery.

So we are waiting for that proposal as to how they see their operations. But, definitely, I anticipate that that office is going to be scaled down because there is a shift in responsibility, and there will still be some dollars for them. But, it will not be at the level that they were before because our goal is to use as much of this money as we possibly can for environmental farm plans so that people can then have their plans in place so they can take advantage of the other programs.

**Mr. Eichler:** As the minister and her staff are well aware, I mean we were out of money in June of last year in regard to the FSAM. So it's a very popular program. It's a very good program, and certainly one that I want to encourage the minister to help those producers that try and put those management plans in place in a way that they are able to sustain them.

\* (15:30)

The biggest problem I have had in calls in regard to FSAM was the frustration of starting the project and not have enough money in order to finish it. So a lot of those projects get started; they don't have enough money on their own to finish those projects, so, of course, then, the project gets put on hold, and some of the work they've done actually goes backwards instead of forwards. So, sometimes, the projects, if they're not 100 percent funded all along, then they actually go backwards rather than forward.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member talks about FSAM, and FSAM was the people who were set up to deliver the program, and the program is the Environmental Farm Plans and the BMPs that come after that.

There's no doubt that there has been a lot of good work. There's been great demand because farmers want to do the right thing and they want to be sure that they are doing the best environmental practices on their farms. There was a pent-up demand because we were squeezed into a shorter time period and people anticipated that that was the level of funding that was going to be there. There were more programs than we could deliver on, but, you know, we have to find a balance. We have to find a balance between this program and the other programs in going forward.

Will every project be addressed? No, but they know that there is this money in place every year. We will continue to move forward, but we will not do everything at once, but it's a recognition that farmers do see this as an opportunity to make some changes on their farms. We will continue to work with them, but that's why we've made the change. Instead of putting the money that was going towards FSAM, we are taking it internally, and we're going to run it through the department because it was departmental staff that do most of the work. That will give us more money to be able to have for delivering the program.

**Mr. Eichler:** Again, correct me if I'm wrong, but my understanding on that particular program was that the federal government was putting in the actual dollars,

and the Province was putting in hours put in by staff, and there were no actual dollars contributed to the program other than that of the federal government. Or is that changed as a result of the new agreement?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, the member is correct. The federal government put the money in, but the Province did all the technical work. They did all the support. They did all the training. They had all the workshops, but if the Province wouldn't have done all of that work, the federal government couldn't have made any payments.

So I don't want to discredit the amount of work that the Province did because you could say the federal government paid the money, but they couldn't have done it without the technical support and the development that our staff did.

I really want to recognize the staff right now because you talk about the number of applications. There was a flood of applications, a flood of anticipation, and people had to work really hard to get those things done.

So, yes, we will continue to do the technical work and the support work and develop the workshops and do the training. The federal dollars will be used for the BMPs. The other change that is happening is that the Province, our staff here in this department, will do the administration rather than federal staff in Regina, so that will bring it closer to home.

**Mr. Eichler:** The minister's pretty on the ball today in regard to reading my mind again. I was just about to talk about the funding coming back out of Regina. It just seems like that was the other holdup as well in regard to the administration of those dollars. So now we can go from not having PFRA anymore to where those dollars will now be administered by the Province of Manitoba. So the turnaround time, will that be a lot quicker? Because what we looked at before had a number of those producers that actually got dollars or had triggered those payments. Once they got them they were told that they had to wait to see how much money was left. Will that now alleviate that particular problem?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The key to this is that the producer will have one person to work with them on their file, and it will be much more local than it was before, so we hope that we can deliver the program more efficiently. Our staff is going to work very closely with the producers and, as the member knows, you're working with people in your region, many times you

know the people, and there's the ability to work more closely.

Are we going to run into difficulties? Of course, somewhere we're going to run into difficulties. Sometimes it won't move as quickly as the producer wants, but sometimes the producer doesn't move as quickly as he or she should, and then they decide that they're ready to move, and they think everybody else should catch up to them as quickly. Will there be issues with finances? There could be, because there's a certain amount of money that will be available each year and there may be some, the ones who get there first, may be able to get their money first and the ones who come later may have to wait. Those are possibilities, but it is our hope that with having our staff do it rather than PFRA doing some of the work, we can work more closely with the producers and deliver more efficiently.

**Mr. Eichler:** Just before we leave this then, the total budget for FSAM then, and I know it's hard to try and—what is the total amount of money that's being invested as compared to what it was in the past? Do we have those figures available to us?

\* (15:40)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member asks a very important question. I want him to know that, under the previous agreement, there was \$32.5 million available, and then that, because it didn't get spent early, there was a large amount, it looked like a very large amount, that was coming at the end. This time, there is \$10.8 million, so the federal government is not putting as much money into the environmental action pillar as we would have hoped, so we're down by two-thirds. That's why there'll be a shorter list of BMPs, and we're going to target this towards provincial priorities like water quality and nutrient management.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm a bit aghast here, actually, when I look at—if you just said \$32.5 million is the number that I understood you to say.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Last year. Last agreement.

**Mr. Eichler:** From the last agreement. Was that over a four-year period too then? Because this \$10.8 million is over a four-year, so you divide that by four. You're talking about \$2 million a year. So is it \$32 million over a four-year period as well?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Over a five-year period.

**Mr. Eichler:** So it's still a substantial amount of money less than what we're expected to work with now.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I would agree.

**Mr. Eichler:** What we do to rectify this? What do we need to do to get some more money out of this very important program that, I think, has established a great rapport with the rural people and one that I believe in strongly. In fact, we've been out there promoting environmental farm plans on a daily basis. I know I get calls on it each and every week, and you multiply this out by the number of producers that are out there, this is a significant cutback, in particular when we're trying to get away from burning. We're trying to get away from spreading fertilizer in the winter months. This is a substantial program that I'm very disappointed that I find out now that actually we're having a cut in this particular budget on this particular program.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, I can tell the member opposite that my staff lobbied very hard on this, and if I would say to him, if he has any influence on the federal government, he should tell them his concern here because it's the same concern that we have. We negotiated very hard. We argued with the federal government that the size of this Growing Forward should be increased and, in fact, it is modestly higher in the whole scheme of things, in all of it, but there are more responsibilities that come with it.

If the member is prepared to argue with the federal government, I would tell him to go and try to encourage them to re-establish or continue on with the national water supply program because that program has also been cancelled by the federal government. They've told us we have to find it out of here, out of this program. So there are some significant pressures. That's why we are going to have to be very focussed, and we're going to have to look at which are our priorities to do the best job within the fund that we can.

The member is right. There is a lot of expectation based on what was in the previous program. He talks about calls he got. I can say that I got calls too where people were anticipating there was going to be more money because of the money that was in there previously. This is a dramatic reduction in what is available for this program.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'll say this on record that I will do everything I can. I will talk to the federal minister and my local MP as well as the Treasury Board. This

initiative is one I talked about earlier that's very important. When we want and talk about clean water and good management practices, this is imperative that we have the dollars to go with it. In fact, I think it's one that has to be a priority for us all.

Manitoba has a large water base, and we have to protect that water base. In order to do that, we need those dollars, provincially and federally. I know every program that we put forward is not going to get approved, but this is one that was started in harmony with the federal and provincial governments. To have a cutback at this particular point in time on this particular initiative when we're working so hard to keep Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg clean and our other waterways, I think, actually, this is a step backwards. I will certainly do everything I can to make contact with those ministers. In fact, I'll try to get the letter out this week. I know that they've already set their budget, but I can assure the minister and her staff that I do believe very strongly in this and will do everything I can to ensure that we do get those dollars if we can find another way in order to do it.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I want the member to know that all provinces were very concerned about these added responsibilities and without an increase in funding. What are we going to do in this province? We see this as a priority. We have this money, and that's why we've made shifts in administration and how it's going to be managed.

We're going to look at where we can leverage funds, because the issues here about water management and nutrient management are very important to our government and to the people of Manitoba. So we're going to go look at the funds we have here, the money that we have in nutrient management program, the money that we have in climate change, and I can assure the member that we will look at how we can get the best value for our dollar and do everything that's possible to ensure that farmers who are doing environmental farm plans can have the best management practices to ensure that we are addressing those concerns with regard to water quality and nutrient management.

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm getting a little wrapped up in this more than I wanted to, but I'm not going to leave it just yet. Do we have the numbers that Manitoba received over the past two years and what Saskatchewan government received over the past two years, because I can't put my hand on it, nor do I really want to bring Saskatchewan into this. If I

remember right, reading about their initiative in regard to the water and their environmental dollars, it seemed to me it was an awful lot of money. Either the provincial government put it in or it came from the federal government. Are we being left out as a result of not having enough programs or is it a provincial-federal decision on each province about the money that's going to be flowed to them?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I can assure the member that all of the provinces have the same concern. The provinces negotiate with the federal government about how they're going to spend their money, what they're going to—and that's why we sign bilateral agreements, because we negotiate within the pot of money about where we are going to use the money.

\* (15:50)

But all provinces are concerned that there is more responsibility here with slightly less money. We will have less money than we had previously for programming than we had before. Mr. Chair, I think Saskatchewan will have a higher total because they have a higher number of farms. They have a much larger agriculture land base.

So Saskatchewan put some money into water development, but they have the same concern that we have, but with the water supply enhancement. They were working their program based on the amount of money that we thought was going to be there through the national water supply agreement, and now that that money is not there they have the same challenges that we do.

**Mr. Eichler:** So what the federal government's going to do is come back and tell me that they gave you \$71 million, actually \$70.5 million, and they're going to say you were the ones that determined where the money wanted to go. So they'll say that the provincial government decided that FSAM wasn't important enough to put the money somewhere else rather than through this particular program. Is that what the minister's outlining for me?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I said to the member earlier, what we do is we each negotiate individual programs and we come to a bilateral agreement of where we want to focus and the federal government agrees with us. I want the member to know that under the previous agreement, under the previous five years, we got this year, the agreement is \$70.5 million. That was the number that I gave the member. Now, under the previous agreement, we were getting \$75 million

which is the wedge money plus the base. We got over \$75 million.

Then there was the water supply enhancement, which was about \$4 million per year. So we were working in the range under the previous agreement of about \$97.5 million, and now we are down to—we're 97.5, 70, so we're about \$27 million short from the federal government.

Just give me a moment here, what's this?

My numbers are not quite accurate. It's even worse than that. It's worse than my first numbers. Rather than 97.5 that I put on the record earlier, if you look at the money under the previous agreement, we were getting, between the APF money, the wedge money, and the water supply enhancement program, we were getting \$101 million. Under this program, we have more responsibility, and we are getting \$70.5 million. So there is a reduction in what the federal government is providing for us and a serious issue with the water supply enhancement because this is a very important program for our rural communities, and we are not going to be able to continue to build up. We're going to continue to lobby, and we're going to try to convince the government that they have a responsibility for water supply here, but, right now, we don't have that.

**Mr. Eichler:** Again, just so I'm perfectly clear. When I write this letter I ought to make sure I know what I'm talking about.

We're talking \$70.5 million under the current agreement over a four-year period, and then, the last agreement—[interjection] No. The \$70.5 million is for a four-year period.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** No. But it includes the continuity agreement that we had last year because we weren't ready to sign. There was a transition year. So there was a continuity agreement for one year and now we have four years going forward, and we add in those numbers. We added in the amount of the continuity period. So it's five and five.

**Mr. Eichler:** So, Mr. Chair, we have a five-year program at \$101 million and a five-year program at \$70.5 million. Is that correct?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** That's right. That's the reduction we've had from the federal government with more responsibility.

**Mr. Eichler:** Well, I know the staff do a fantastic job, and I'm very disappointed to find out now. I mean, after reading this press release I thought we

did pretty good, and press releases are supposed to do that. That's the job of a press release. But, when you get into the nitty gritty—and I guess that's why Estimates are so important, because when I get to the nuts and bolts of what we're actually talking about here, as a total number of dollars that's being spent we're talking about \$6 million a year less in funding that's going to be going out in order to produce those programs that are so vitally important that we've been trying to say where we're going to be going and what we're going to be doing. But, when you take out \$6 million a year, that's a substantial amount of money.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairperson, the biggest difference in this is the national—in the water supply enhancement agreement. While we were negotiating the Growing Forward agreement, we were under the understanding that this money was going to be outside. All provinces were under the impression that this money was going to be outside. Then, when we got to the agreement, the money they told us it was included, and that's where the difference comes. It is serious. It's a big problem, and we have to continue to work on that to try to get the federal government to continue on with this program. But, as we have it now, they have just taken that agreement and put it into the Growing Forward agreement, but haven't put the dollars with it.

As well, I talked earlier about in the first agreement there was wedge funding, base and wedge funding. The wedge funding is no longer there. So that's where that other difference comes. You have the money—wedge money was about \$25 million; water supply agreement, \$20 million. So that's where the differences come.

**Mr. Eichler:** Again, just for clarification, the \$70.5 million, is that considered block funding then, and the Province determines, I guess, through staff, negotiations of where that money would be spent, and then they come back and say that you could have spent it on water supply if that was one of your priorities, or did they establish these programs with you to determine that \$70.5 million in total?

\* (16:00)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I outlined the programs that we have here. The programs that we outlined were negotiated by the federal and provincial governments. That's how we came to the bilateral agreement of what the different priorities should be.

All the time that we were negotiating, we were told that the water supply enhancement was outside of the agreement. It wasn't until we got to the very end that we found out that the money wasn't there, but we signed the agreement because we believe there's still room to negotiate, and we are going to continue to lobby and pressure the federal government, as others will, to see whether we can get this program in.

If you look at the terms and conditions, nowhere in here is water or water supply. There are issues like the Strategic Innovation Fund, Industry Innovation Fund, business development, sector development, food safety, environmental action, environmental information and even under environmental it was clear that we're looking at BMPs, not about getting water to farms or to communities.

So it was a shock to us; it was a shock to other provinces. We will continue to work on it.

**Mr. Eichler:** Again, if the minister or her staff could help me shed the light, and I guess I could do my own research on this, but do you have the numbers that Saskatchewan announced in their particular program or do you know if they had a different program that they announced? Was that a federal-provincial program as well, or was it just announced separately?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We'd have to look at the news release that—the member is talking about Saskatchewan, but the federal government has made the same changes in Saskatchewan as they have here in pulling out of one program, and then saying, but, yes, if you want to do anything with water, you can do it under this agreement.

So all of the provinces are in the same situation. We can check on what Saskatchewan has announced and get back to you with more information, but I know that it's been in the newspapers. The federal government's trying to make it look like they've transferred the money, but when you add up the numbers, they've shifted the responsibility, but haven't transferred the funds.

**Mr. Eichler:** I can certainly pull that myself. I just thought if they had them handy.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We're told that Saskatchewan is in the same boat as we are, and they do not want to use their Growing Forward money for water supply. So we are on the same page of trying to get the federal government to continue on with the program that

they had rather than trying to carve it out of Growing Forward.

**Mr. Eichler:** Just on that initiative, the water supply initiative, what kind of dollars are we looking at in order to work that program where it would be sustainable for the province of Manitoba?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The funding was about \$4 million per year and, if you look at the backlog of rural water supply demand, we could continue on for about 10 years at that level of funding, and we would not complete everything. So there is a huge backlog in rural water demands.

To try to do it out of this program would just deteriorate our other programs. As we talk about this, there are some really important programs here. If we want to move the industry forward in food processing, if we want to take on new innovation, whether it's nutraceuticals, functional foods or improving farmers' management skills and helping them change their farm operations, all of those things, if we are going to take money from those programs for water supply, then we will see a decrease. If we're going to move away from food safety or on environmental actions, which are a priority for us, then we are just cutting into something else, and so that's why we'll continue to lobby the federal government.

**Mr. Eichler:** Thank you, Madam Minister.

Just before we do leave water, I know one of the initiatives that was under way, and has been under way for a number of years, is the abandoned well program. Does this mean that the abandoned well program will now be scrapped as a result of no agreement, or will that program be sustained through some other initiative?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The abandoned well program is mostly being handled by the conservation districts, and it's being handled through other programs. It wasn't part of this, but it is continuing.

**Mr. Eichler:** I think that pretty well clears that up on the Growing Forward programs. I certainly want to thank the minister and her staff for being patient with me working through this, because it's such an important part of the Estimates process in order to determine where we're going to be going in the next five years in regard to those initiatives. So thank you for that.

I do have a number of questions; constituency questions have been brought forward or to my

attention in regard to individual problems that I would like to ask the minister, and staff, while she has them here. The first one actually comes from a constituent in regard to Coggins testing. My understanding is that it used to be administered through the province, then sent to Regina, and now it's going to Saskatoon. As we know, the horses that are going out have to have that test. The question is, is the minister or her department looking at ways in order to try to alleviate some of those hurdles that are in place in order to get this done in a timely manner, because I know this particular individual lost four horse sales because of the lack of getting it done in a very timely fashion?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The first thing is that those tests were going to Regina, but the Regina lab has closed down, so now they're going to Saskatoon. What we have to do, if there is a slowness in getting the results of this test back, we could probably work with Saskatoon to find out why it's taking a little longer so we could have it done in a more timely basis. We thought about having the test done here. Our lab would have to be accredited. But, when staff looked at it, the volume just didn't warrant doing the test here. We can certainly revisit that if there is a demand for this kind of test.

But, again, we have to continue to work on centres of excellence; not everybody can do everything. We talk about the labs here in Manitoba. The virology lab, although it doesn't relate to livestock, we want a centre of excellence on infectious diseases. If another centre can do the testing without us, and we could have it done in as timely a way, as if we were having the tests here, then that would work. But what I can commit to the member is we will do some work. We'll check with Saskatoon to see what time lines are like and if there is anything that can be done. If there is a reason that it's taking an exceptionally long time, then we would have to review that and revisit it.

\*(16:10)

**Mr. Eichler:** If the minister would do that and get back to us. I did have a note sent in—I'm just saying for the record—on the amount that was in the press release that was sent out by the Saskatchewan government. I don't know what these numbers represent, but I do think it's important that they did announce their initiative. This could be a one-year, two-year, three-year, four-year, five-year agreement.

It doesn't really say because it's supposed to be a press release, but they're committing \$52.8 million

for community wells, large diameter wells and small diameter farm wells, shallow or deep buried pipelines, dugouts. For approved on-farm projects, it would cover 50 percent of eligible costs to a maximum of \$60,000 per applicant. For approved community well projects, the program will cover two-thirds cost to a maximum of \$150,000 per R.M. or Indian band.

So I think that—you know, certainly, as the minister and her staff has outlined, as she said, it wasn't in their particular agreement, Mr. Chair, but Saskatchewan does have a significant amount of money that they have negotiated to get in there.

So we will, as I said, follow up with the minister on this federally and with the provincial MP in my area as well.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We'll track that down and find out. As the member is reading that press release, it sounds like a provincial program that the Saskatchewan government has set up, and it seems that there are quite a few well issues.

If you look at Manitoba, our producers, with a few exceptions, are in relatively good shape. There is a more abundant supply of water in this province, and we aren't seeing those kinds of problems. The issues we have are pipelines. Rural pipelines is a major issue for us and the other one is irrigation.

So I think that Saskatchewan is facing some bigger challenges with water supply than we are. I'm assuming that that's a provincial program, but certainly we'll check into it.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** My curiosity and I'd like the minister to address some of the aspects in growing Manitoba and the growing Manitoba fund, and where I want to go here is toward rural water pipelines which I mentioned in my budget remarks the other day.

I'd like to find out what PFRA, being nonexistent, really anymore, in that field, what's the Province's contribution of how they're going to handle the funding of rural water pipelines.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, we have a real dilemma on our hands because it is an important issue for some rural communities, and we have some pent-up demand for rural water pipelines.

As we were working on the Growing Forward agreement, we were always under the impression and had been given information that the water pipeline, the national water supply agreement, was going to

stay in place. As we came to the end, as we were getting ready to sign the agreement, we found out from the federal government that, indeed, they were not continuing with the PFRA national water supply agreement, and they told us that if we want to do those things, we have to do it within Growing Forward. However, they did not transfer the money.

The money that was in the PFRA agreement for the national water supply did not come to it. In fact, we are getting less money than we did in the previous agreement. So that's a challenge for us and we're still negotiating and hoping that we can convince the federal government that this national water supply program is very important and that we want to see this issue reopened and further discussed.

**Mr. Briese:** I was told by my sources that there was substantial federal money that went into growing Manitoba, and that money went with a fair amount of discretion on how the Province could spend it, and some of that discretion could apply to rural water pipelines.

Now, what I'd like to know is how much actual federal money came in that was unallocated to specific areas, into the growing Manitoba programs?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As I had said previously, the federal and provincial governments work very closely in negotiating the bilateral agreements and determining which areas the money would go into. As we were negotiating, it was always under our understanding that water supply was not going to be included. If we were to now take on water supply, that means we would have to cut money from environmental farm plans. We would have to cut money from food safety risk management or some of the business development or strategic innovation too, and all of these are very important. There is flexibility within them. There is flexibility within the agreement where we can—but we have spelled out our priorities. What the member should know is that in the last agreement, we got \$101 million over five years and in this agreement, we got \$70.5 million. So that's a huge reduction.

On top of that there are new responsibilities, and then to say, well, if you want to do water supply you can take it out of that. We would have to make dramatic cuts to many of the other programs that are important to our producers.

**Mr. Briese:** I'd ask the minister, what was the rationale for a cut?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, I guess you'd have to ask the federal government. The federal government has made a decision that they aren't going to be involved in the national water supply program anymore. That's their decision. They've changed their strategy. They say if you want to do this you can do it with Growing Forward. The impression out there is that the money from the national water supply was rolled in, but, in actual fact, that's not true. There is less money than we had previously by over-\$30 million less.

**Mr. Briese:** Well, the rural water program in Manitoba was about 1.1 million from the federal government, plus usually they were able to pick up a little bit out of Saskatchewan and Alberta that weren't used in their programs. So it sometimes ran around anywhere from \$1 million to \$1.5 million from the federal government on those programs.

I'm still having trouble getting my head around the fact that there was \$30 million of federal money cut out of the various programs. I'm wondering if there was money earmarked that went elsewhere that was considered part of that overall pot of money.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** About \$20 million of that was the water supply agreement. So that's the money that we are talking about that they cancelled and now is missing in the total. That's part of what we're adding in when we talk about what's in the APF, what we've got now and what we had under the water supply agreement.

I can say to the member, yes, Manitoba did well under the water supply agreement. We did, if it wasn't being fully spent in other provinces, then we were capturing some of that money; however, we still do have a gap. We were getting about \$4 million a year. If we were able to continue that on for another 10 years, we might be pretty close to meeting a demand or there still could be a few communities out there that still wouldn't have the water that they need. But there is a lot of demand and we were capturing some money here in Manitoba that wasn't being used in other provinces. But the money is not there now. So it's a reduction in funds that is available, and if we were to go to do water supply, we would have to make cuts in other areas.

\*(16:20)

**Mr. Briese:** So then, Madam Minister, you've somewhat convinced me on that. But I guess the question, then, is, is there is a demand out there? Three municipalities of my area, the R.M. of Lansdowne, the R.M. of Westbourne, the R.M. of

Rosedale, and there's a number, I think, six or seven municipalities in the southwest corner of the province that are all located in our fairly drought-prone area all looking for rural water to pipelines. The question is, where are we going to move from here? Because the local or municipality input certainly can't exceed the one-third that it was before. It's just far too costly, and we need a process where two-thirds of the funding for those necessary works comes from various levels of government.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** This is an important issue, and that's why I said we have a demand for about the next 10 years for \$4 million a year. And when we found—we were told that we had to include the water supply in the environmental plan envelope. We went to the federal government and said, okay, if we have to do that, then give us \$4 million a year to go with the program because that's how much you're saving out of that program. They said no to us. They said, allocate your \$2 million a year however you see. So, on the one hand, we have the member opposite, my critic, saying, you know, that environmental farm plans are very important, farmers need money to meet the upgrades on their BMPs. That's where I talked about how much money we had in that area, but we don't have money. But I can assure the member that the provincial money is there. We've had discussion with MIT, and this is a shared program, federal, provincial and municipal. The provincial money is available. Municipal money is available. It's the feds that are not at the table.

So that's something very important that we have to continue to negotiate on to ensure that we get here. The member's going to say, well, are you going to fill the federal gap here? I'm not sure how we can meet all of our other requirements that we have signed a bilateral agreement. We've signed a bilateral agreement on the kinds of programs we're going to deliver. We have a joint federal-provincial agreement on this, and those are the areas that we are going to work on, and we're going to continue to try to push the federal government to live up to their responsibility and ensure that we have this money for water supply. I would encourage the member to offer any support he can. Other provinces are on the same page as we are.

**Mr. Briese:** I'll get off this one in a moment here, but the question still remains: What are we going to do with the ones that are in the hopper right now? Do we cut the projects in half that would have been funded and fund half as many projects with a two-thirds one-third funding process or are you



totally dug in on the one-third funding and that's where it's going to be and anybody that can't come up with the two-thirds is out of luck?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the program is managed by MIT, so any changes to the program that are made would have to be made in MIT. But we all recognize this water supply program as very important and we're very disappointed with the federal government and what they've done here.

**Mr. Briese:** Okay, I think we've probably gone as far as we can on that one. Just very briefly, but I do want to touch on it, and I didn't have the opportunity yesterday when crop insurance was here, but I want to touch on the wildlife compensation part of it and the fact that we have 80 percent coverage. Saskatchewan has recently moved to 100 percent coverage. We used to have 100 percent coverage here and it was cut, and I know it's costly, but I cannot understand why the people that the damage occurs against are not compensated at 100 per cent. If you hit a deer with your car you are covered for 100 percent. Why is it different for wildlife damage on crops and livestock?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We were, at one time, at 100 percent, and then we brought that down so that we would—because it was a 60-40 agreement and we had to come—coverage to 80 percent is all that the federal government would share on. So we were bringing it in line with all of the other provinces. All of the other provinces are at 80 percent.

Just recently, Saskatchewan made a decision to top up to 100 percent. But I would ask the member to look at Saskatchewan's program versus Manitoba's program because even though ours is at 80 percent, it is still a better program because it covers a much wider range. It's broader than in other provinces.

**Mr. Briese:** I guess the point remains, though—and I farmed for 40 years and I farmed beside a lake where I had a lot of waterfowl damage over the years—I fail to see why any agricultural producer, livestock or grain, should be penalized because they take wildlife damage, if they are doing everything in their power. I used to put up scarecrows and I use to put out bangers and I use to check the fields four times a day to make sure the geese weren't landing there, and you continue to take those losses. It's even worse in the livestock area because most of the losses that occur, occur out in a pasture where, in a lot of cases, if there is bush, you cannot find the carcass and you have to have absolute proof with the adjusters that there was a wildlife kill.

It just seems very unfair when a person, as I said earlier, can hit a deer with a car, they get 100 percent coverage on their car. I can have a wolf walk out of the bush and kill a calf, and I don't get 100 percent coverage.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, if you were going to get 100 percent coverage, you would be paying a premium and you would be buying your deductible down. You're paying for that. On the wildlife compensation, there is no premium.

But I would say to the member, as someone who has lived in a rural area, farmed in a rural area, I know exactly what he's saying. But for me, you know—I've had geese in my farm that have done damage. I've had deer that have done damage and I've lost calves in the pasture and haven't been able to find them until it was too late—it is part of the business that we're in.

But, again, I'll say, there is no premium on this insurance. If there is something that producers want to start to talk about, to look at some kind of premium—but, right now, we are in line with all of the other provinces, except for Saskatchewan, who has now determined that they want to do a top-up. But our insurance on predators is broader than what Saskatchewan offers.

**Mr. Briese:** I'll just ask this for clarification. You say there is no premium but is it not, especially on crop damage, coming out of crop insurance, or is that out of a totally separate fund? If it is coming out of regular payouts, out of crop insurance—and I know it's funded by the feds, partially—then it's maybe part of our premiums when we're paying our crop insurance too.

\* (16:30)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There is no premium paid by the producer. The premium on this is paid by the federal-provincial government. It doesn't really affect their claim because it's paid on a spot-loss basis. If there's a particular amount of damage, and particularly on the livestock, there is no premium. In this calculation, it is the federal-provincial government that pay this premium.

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** I want to thank the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) for allowing me a few minutes for questions. I just want to follow up on where the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) is going.

There have been a number of questions in regard to wells on either acreages or on farms and just wondering, for clarification, if there's any funding available either through your department or if the minister has knowledge of other departments, for financing wells, upgrading wells, putting in new wells—that sort of issue.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The well program that the member talks about is a federal program under PFRA. PFRA is now rolled into Agri-Environment, but it is our understanding that that program is still there. No, we haven't heard that it has changed, but it's filled up very quickly, so if people are looking to apply for that program, they should do it fairly quickly.

**Mr. Cullen:** Just to clarify, it's your understanding that that program is available through PFRA—it was.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We have not heard of any changes. We can do some checking and clarify, but that was a federal program that was available under PFRA, and we have not been given any notice that that program no longer exists.

**Mr. Cullen:** I certainly will follow up with the minister on that to see if we can track down a program.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** It was a base program. It's not part of any of these agreements here.

**Mr. Cullen:** I apologize for missing your earlier discussion about beneficial management practices. Certainly encouraged to see that we do have a new program going to be up and running, hopefully fairly shortly. I will certainly read *Hansard* to find out some of the details about that program.

I guess my first concern is a lot of producers have said they liked the old program. It worked very well, and I think it was a good way to get money into producers' hands to look at environmental issues that had to be dealt with on the farm level. Now, it's unfortunate, I know we've missed a year already on that particular program. Certainly encouraged, though, that the minister has signed on to the new program. We're certainly hopeful that that will be rolled out fairly soon so that we don't miss another season on that.

I just wonder if the minister could give me some clarification here in terms of the dollar amounts, where we were, year over year, dollar-wise, under the old environmental farm program, and where we are going to be here, year over year, with the sustainable agricultural practices program that's

going to be implemented. I just want to get a bit of a feel. I understand it's about—somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$19 million over four years. This is a new program. What were we looking at last time around? I'm just trying to get a sense of where we are, kind of year over year, dollars per year, going into this particular program.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to correct the record. The member said that we missed a year. In actual fact, we didn't miss a year. Last year we spent \$5 million, so we didn't miss out on anything. It was there.

Mr. Chairman, the old program had about \$5 million per year in it. This program has about \$2 million in it, so there is less money available. The total package on the environmental action plan—under the previous program which was BMPs, environmental farm plans, surveys, we had \$32.5 million. Now we have \$18.8 million, so there's a dramatic reduction in the amount of money that's available under the program, so that's why we'll be shortening the list of BMPs. We're going to be targeting this money towards our provincial priorities, which is water quality and nutrient management.

**Mr. Cullen:** You alluded to my next question. I'm just wondering who develops the new BMPs, if that is strictly a provincial authority or whether there is some discussion with the federal government. Obviously, each province is probably going to have different priorities here, and I'm just trying to wonder how that particular discussion is undertaken and then how the final BMPs are arrived at.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I have to correct the number. I said that the amount of money from the federal side under the environmental action was \$18.8 million. Actually, the federal dollars are \$10.8 million, so that was a mistake on my part.

Who develops the BMPs? The federal and provincial staff work together. They come to an agreement and then we have consultation with the commodity groups. At this stage, the federal and provincial officials have met, they've come to some agreements. Now we have to meet with the commodity groups, which we have not done yet.

**Mr. Cullen:** I apologize again if you've discussed this, but I just wonder what kind of time frame you're looking at in terms of making these BMPs available. When will that unfold? Do you have any kind of a

date when you're going to be able to make these BMPs available to the public?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Although the final date for the meeting with the commodity groups hasn't been set, we hope to have this nailed down within the next three weeks to a month so then we can determine what the BMPs will be.

**Mr. Cullen:** We certainly look forward to hearing what those BMPs will look like.

The Province introduced last year, Bill 15 and looking at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba, and we know at least the Premier (Mr. Doer) has flagged that as being a bit of an issue for him. We look at the national inventory report on greenhouse gas that came out just in the last day or two and one of the areas here it talks about is agriculture, and it appears that there's been a fairly significant increase in greenhouse gas from the agricultural sector in the last—this goes back from 1990 to 2007.

You know, giving that, having said that and having said that it certainly looks like a priority for the government to at least make some attempt to at least talk about greenhouse gas emissions, what does this mean for agricultural producers across Manitoba? What is the impact of the legislation that's been brought forward by the government? You look at the Estimates booklet that Agriculture's put out and there's certainly talk about reducing greenhouse gas in Manitoba.

\* (16:40)

How is the Province going to implement that, and what are the impacts going to be for agriculture producers across Manitoba?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If you look at the numbers, the agriculture sector only contributes 1 percent of greenhouse gas emissions on a national scale.

Manitoba's numbers have come down. Agriculture was 36 percent, and it has come down to 33 percent. So there's some decrease in there.

But the reason why the agriculture number is so high in Manitoba is that we don't have other industries that are high emitters. We don't have an oil industry. We don't have other industries. So, in other provinces, like Alberta, the oil industry is a higher emitter or in another province where there's higher manufacturing.

So that makes our number look a lot higher because of the emitters that we have in this province. But work has to be done, and it has been done on changing production patterns. Research is in place, and we're working on how do we reduce these emissions.

So we want to do the research on why there are these emissions and how can they be changed. Certainly, there are feeding practices that are changed. We look at the work that's being done at Glenlea, and there are different tests being done on emissions.

You know, cows are high producers of greenhouse gas, so they're looking at how you can change habits of eating to change their digestion, fertilizer placement and how it can be placed in the soil that there isn't as much emission from it.

But a short-term goal identified is to stabilize the level of the greenhouse gas from agriculture by 2010, which is only a year away, and then gradually reduce this amount over time with an ultimate longer-term goal of reaching the Kyoto Accord base line of 4.14, which is 6 percent below the 1999 level.

So we're working at it. It takes time, and it's a matter of changing practices that are on the farm. I've always said our farmers are very good at that. There's the greenhouse gas that comes from the soil. People have changed over to different types of tillage methods, and that's how we're addressing it.

**Mr. Cullen:** I know the minister, certainly, has taken some steps to reduce greenhouse gas here in Manitoba. We've seen about a 7 percent reduction in the cattle industry here in Manitoba. I'm not sure what the decrease in the hog industry has been in terms of numbers, but we could be 30 percent or 40 percent reduction in terms of the number of animals in Manitoba. So, you know, if that's the government approach to reducing greenhouse gas is to destroy industry here in the province, it's certainly interesting in the minister's comment on that, but it is unfortunate those sorts of things are happening.

The United States has certainly signalled that we're going to be headed into a cap-and-trade type system here in terms of how we deal with greenhouse gas emissions. It's an expectation that the federal government will follow along, and certainly it looks like the provincial government is going to follow along on the cap-and-trade side of things as well. Obviously, this could have some pretty serious implications for the agriculture industry, and I'm just

wondering if the minister has got some comments in terms of where cap and trade is going to leave our agriculture producers, and, in fact, the agriculture industry here in Manitoba and if her department has actually been diligently doing some work on that regard to see where our producers will be at the end of the day.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, I first of all have to say to the member I'm very disappointed that he is taking so lightly the challenges that our livestock industry is facing and saying that the reductions in pork production and cattle production is because of government policy. I wish the member would be more accurate in his comments because in actual fact our producers have been facing very significant trade challenges. They have been facing challenges by a high Canadian dollar. They have been facing challenges because of trade barriers, country-of-origin labelling, high input costs, and certainly BSE has had an impact on our producers, but the member's numbers on the hog industry are way off. If he looks at the cattle industry, other provinces have had a greater reduction than Manitoba has.

So the member would like to say that it is because of government policy that we are seeing a reduction in our livestock industry, and nothing could be further from the truth. Our industry is facing challenges because of the things that I have pointed out. Country-of-origin labelling is significant pressures because the exports of weanlings are going down, and people have to discontinue the production of weanlings because there is no market for them. Finishing hogs were going to the United States; those markets are closing down to them, and farmers cannot continue to raise. I'm hoping that will turn around.

On our cattle industry as well, the need for slaughter capacity is something that we have worked very hard on despite the steps that the members opposite have taken to criticize and the need for slaughter capacity in this province. We have continued to work and we'll continue to work on that.

Are our industries facing a challenge? Absolutely. Will we continue to work with them? Of course we will. That's why when the pork producers came to us for a targeted advance, we asked for that to be put in place. They came to us to ask for loans, we put those loans in place. When the cattle industry was facing difficulty, we put various programs in place. We are there working with the industry and we will continue to work with the industry.

\* (16:50)

With regard to the cap and trade, we've certainly given signals that we support that model, and we see that as a possible opportunity for farmers because we don't have some of the larger emitters. So can this be an opportunity for farmers to get some credits or trade off some of their credits. But it's a balancing act. We have to figure that out. We're looking at different proposals. That's not finalized yet, but certainly some people see that there will be a bit of a challenge. I'm hoping that there will be an opportunity for farmers to be able to take advantage of it.

But we don't have a final plan, papers spelled out that I can share with the member. It's one we have to work at because we have to look at some model, and the cap and trade model is the one that we have said we support.

**Mr. Cullen:** Obviously, we, as members on different sides of the House, we will certainly tend to disagree on numbers and why we're at certain numbers.

But, in other provinces, the idea of carbon credit trading has taken off, and they seem to have a fairly positive environment there where producers are involved in the carbon trading.

Very little input has been there in terms of government regulation. I'm just wondering if the minister is taking a serious look at, you know, letting the business of carbon trading, the industry, look after itself, or if the minister is looking at some form of government regulation here in Manitoba.

In fact, it already happens. We have Manitoba producers and probably various companies that are involved in carbon trading here in Manitoba through Alberta markets. You know, this is occurring already. I'm just wondering where the minister sees the carbon credit market—how she sees it developing here in Manitoba.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Just before I get to the other question, I want to go back to the member's comments on the cattle industry. I just want to put on the record on the cattle and the calf sector, the member is just about right when he says 7 percent. We're at about 94.5 percent, so 5.5 percent of what we were. So there's been little over a 5 percent reduction.

On the pork side, he said there's been about a 30 percent decrease in the pork industry. The pork numbers for '09 are at 95.4 percent. So there has

been less than a 5 percent reduction. So the numbers that the member put on the record are a little distorted with regard to how much decline that we have had in this industry.

With the issue of carbon trading, this is very much an emerging business, and it's one we're monitoring. I say to the producers that are involved in it, buyer beware. Be careful because this is new and sometimes there's a bit of smoke and mirrors that's going on here with this carbon trading. I know there are a few examples. Viterra is one example that they're working at reducing summer fallow. We don't have very much summer fallow in this province, so there isn't much opportunity there. There's another company that's giving away covers for lagoons then they get the credit for what's captured there.

Mr. Chair, it's a question of the company developing a protocol that people will be comfortable that they're able to track. There has to be a tracking system to be sure that what's being said is what they're really getting. It's a new area, emerging market, and we're monitoring it, but we're neither pro nor con. That's a business decision farmers are making with companies and they will have to decide on it.

**Mr. Cullen:** I guess I want to clarify. We're kind of relatively new to Manitoba, this whole carbon trading issue. I'm kind of wondering how it might overlap with the new sustainable agriculture practices program. Is there going to be some kind of overlap there in terms of the new program that we're going to roll out and carbon credits? Is the Province looking at those two areas as being one entity, or are you just looking at this new sustainable agriculture practices program as a stand-alone, or is it going to be tied in with the carbon credit trading that's going on now?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As I said, this is an emerging area and first of all, I'd like to introduce Roselle Miko, who has joined us at the table. She's a policy analyst working on the whole climate change area for us.

We have a three-pronged approach, research to have a base line on this. We're doing extension work and we're developing protocols so that we would have all of those things ready so that we can, indeed, determine how to best implement this for producers.

I believe the member was asking about the programs we have in place, and if an individual takes advantage of a program, will they get the credits. If they take advantage of the MSAP Program, they will

get that advantage, but they will not get any carbon credits for it.

**Mr. Cullen:** So, to clarify, if a producer signs on with a BMP, he's giving up his carbon credits to the Province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5 o'clock, the committee rise.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (14:50)

**Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski):** This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of Executive Council. Would the First Minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 29 of the Estimates book. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Yes. I took as notice, yesterday, the whole issue of MIOPs and I'm correct that most of them have been listed in Orders-in-Council. There are some that are still being negotiated. You know, there's been other MIOPs in the past that are still being paid off. For example, Motor Coach is in the media today, and thankfully they've gone through the bankruptcy challenges and the collective bargaining challenges of the last couple of months.

Since September, we've had MIOP loans which have been in Orders-in-Council and press releases to Loewen Windows, to the Winnipeg Airports Authority—but that's primarily flowing through to the Standard Aero—the Hytek company, the member might have heard of that company in the Neepawa operation, and a furniture company in Winnipeg.

The last one we announced—and it kind of gives you a flavour of what we've done—the cold weather research and education centre in Thompson, we have a MIOP loan, I believe, of \$9 million and we have—and it's in a press release—the federal government, through the western diversification, is actually putting in a \$13-million grant. We're putting in a \$9-million interest-bearing loan, and the private sector, Rolls Royce and Pratt & Whitney, are going to put over \$40 million in. So you can see that it's, for us, relative to the federal government—I want to say, I want to thank the federal government for their investment in northern Manitoba. Ours is a loan. Theirs is an investment.

So those are some of the major ones that all have had Order-in-Council documents signed and, obviously, we use—we have changed a bit the interest rate policy. We charge a slight benefit from the provincial interest rate to the corporate interest rate and, most times, we've used them as back up to, or a part of a financing package with banks. For example, with Flyer, we used it as part of a bank—I mean, it was clear the order book was really solid but the liquidity was really weak, and so we used it as a bank refinancing. In the case of Flyer, the \$20 million was repaid very quickly, and we actually made money on it. At one point we thought we were going to lose the company—not thought, but we were worried, we were challenged.

So, so far we've been able to show mostly positive performance, not universally, but the net number that I looked at last was positive.

I mentioned McKenzie Seeds when the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) was here. That has worked out better than we thought, and I want to thank Mr. Kilgour and his staff doing the due diligence. The member opposite would know Mr. Jim Kilgour. He and his people provide all the due diligence, and we have tried to follow, and have followed his advice with every agreement we've had. For every one of those agreements we agree to, there's a lot we disagreed with, and the member opposite would know that from his previous experience in government.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I thank the Premier for that information.

I think he made reference in that response to a Winnipeg furniture company. Can you just indicate which company he was referring to, and what was the loan provided in that case?

**Mr. Doer:** Palliser Furniture is in a press release. There's another furniture company that's in an Order-in-Council that is attempting to take a low-key approach, but is in an Order-in-Council that's been published.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I want to thank the Premier for the comments in terms of the position of New Flyer, and, obviously, many were concerned about the situation at New Flyer. Can the Premier indicate, and this is good news, the factors that led to its ability to repay that loan quickly? Was it simply a matter that its short-term bank credit was frozen as a result of the credit crisis, or was there some other factor that

required New Flyer to come to government for short-term support?

**Mr. Doer:** We were faced with the possibility that New Flyer, because of lack of liquidity, was going potentially to—it was in pretty serious straits. Actually, there were two bus companies, I believe it was over the winter of 2001 and '02, post 9/11. It was an economic decline in the United States and in Canada, and it was a real challenge in terms of those companies.

We sat down with both of them. In the case of New Flyer, we sat down with them and talked about the new market. We thought lower emissions eventually would be positive as a long-term marketing strategy, as well as the financing. It was mostly bank led, but there was a venture company from New York.

I always thought, in the material I received, that it wasn't a problem with their product, that there wasn't a problem with their productivity, that there wasn't a problem with the order book. It was a problem of liquidity, and the kind of innovations that had been made by some of the previous CEOs and engineers just required people to make sure that, as they'd gone to the next step in the order book, they have the next step in management. That was part of the restructuring.

The \$20-million loan was repaid to us by the venture fund rather quickly. They also worked with the auto workers in terms of a long-term plan. It also included the plants in St. Cloud and Crookston, because this is a bus company that, obviously, has the advantage of the great productivity in Manitoba, but also has plants in St. Cloud and Crookston. You note that a couple of weeks ago, Joe Biden went to the plant in St. Cloud to announce the environmentally friendly stimulus package, which, I thought, was laudatory to what's going on in a Manitoba company.

We note, now, that it's also hired Mr. Soubry to be its CEO, the former CEO of Standard Aero. We've had a great relationship with Mr. Soubry, as I'm sure members opposite do. He's a very credible CEO, and that's a decision made by the private board.

We also know that they're getting—in this tough economic times, every company is challenged, but because their products have lower emissions and lighter weights, they're doing quite well in terms of their market share. We're hoping that the internal

trade agreement in Canada will actually get some markets open, as the member opposite will know some of those challenges. Conservatives aren't necessarily all free traders, if you know what I mean.

\* (15:00)

So we also, in the case of Motor Coach, we restructured. Motor Coach has retained over 50 percent of the market for, say, Greyhound buses and highway bus transportation. They feel, over the long haul, even with the dollar being up at \$1.05, they have positive markets. They had, again, liquidity challenges through restructuring their finances. But in terms of productivity at the plant, they're doing quite well.

We announced the Composites Innovation Centre in and around that agreement. It got ridiculed by some columnists, who will go unnamed. They know who they are. Now Boeing has been using, and the aerospace industry has been using, the Composites Innovation Centre here to provide light fuel efficient products. So the ridicule has turned into a real advantage. The punditry kind of analysis has proven to be wrong. We're not going to get a correction, I know, on the record, ever. But it was a good investment for both ourselves and the federal government to go to the Composites Innovation Centre.

I believe it was the former Minister of Industry, Mr. Tobin, that we worked on this agreement with, and it's actually been helpful to Manitoba's overall manufacturing sector. When we proposed it, I'm glad that they went with it because, for a modest price, we've had thousands of jobs.

Now, I'm worried about the market in terms of Boeing. There are challenges in terms of orders of planes. But I mentioned the Composites Innovation Centre because it has utility beyond just the traditional bus manufacturers. It has been helpful to us in aerospace as well.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I thank the Premier for that overview. We certainly agree that these are all tremendous Manitoba companies that he's made reference to, all of which are led by extremely capable individuals and we want to see them succeed. Obviously, we have a responsibility to take a look at the nature of the relationships, but we certainly want to see them succeed and don't want them to suffer as a result of factors that are beyond their control, particularly global credit markets and

conditions with respect to lending that exist within the economy more generally.

So I thank the Premier for those comments. We might have some follow-up on some of the details in respect of some of the transactions, but otherwise I will say that we support any effort to ensure the viability of all of these very good companies and make good products that are sought after in markets around the world.

Just moving on from MIOP and the economic situation. I did mention yesterday that I've got a few questions on the floodway project, as the Premier may have anticipated. So I wanted to just start by going back to the questions that were asked in 2006 that followed some of the decisions that were made by the Floodway Authority to scale back certain aspects of the expansion project as it became clear that there wasn't going to be the funding to deal with every aspect that was initially recommended in part of the floodway design and, in particular, the raising of bridges and the widening of the channel as it passed underneath those bridges.

Secondly, the issue of the primary dikes inside the city of Winnipeg, which did their job, and are doing their job currently, but which were highlighted by the engineers as a matter that needed to be looked at as part of the drive to create one-in-700-year flood protection for the citizens of Winnipeg.

I wonder if the Premier can just comment on the fact that there remains bridge work to be done, and, secondly, what his view is on whether the primary dike situation inside the city is adequate for the possibility of a one-in-700-year flood, as much as we may hope that that never arises. I ask whether or not we would be ready for it, given the current state of the project.

**Mr. Doer:** The excavation work was finished this spring for one-in-700 years. There was work. I'll have to get a progress report on the outlet into the river, and I also would note that one of the first agreements we had, and we have talked about—in fact, I raised it with the Prime Minister last week, and Minister Toews, was for some dredging at the outlet area, and that hasn't been completed.

So you get some issues of, you know, in terms of when is it going to be completed. I know that in terms of, if we had to have water at one-in-700 years go around the city, that could have been achieved this spring. Has the floodway been completed for those people north of the city with dredging being

one of the issues that was committed by the—now we've gone through three different prime ministers on this issue. Some of the issues I have to keep on the front burner with different administrations.

On the issue of the bridge work—and one bridge now has become redundant because the city of Winnipeg is not using it anymore either, but on the issue of bridge work, we basically said to the federal government there would not be a cost overrun. When the new government got elected, they evaluated the floodway, and the amount of money allocated was 665. It was for the floodway. It wasn't for the dikes, as the member opposite has raised in questions. In fact, even the dike issue, the internal dike system in the city of Winnipeg is in debate. I know they went to Glenwood Crescent because I lived there after the '97 flood. I left my dike up. Some from the 1950s—some of them were left up. I wasn't living there then. But I left my dike up. My engineering friend beside me didn't and he got more flooded than I did in '97.

So there were debates at Kingston Crescent; there was a proposal at a certain level. I was not at Kingston Crescent. They agreed to a little bit less than what people had recommended. Scotia Street; there was an agreement to do some work on Scotia Street. Some of it hasn't happened. I'm not sure whether it will or will not.

I would point out in this flood event there was about 260 homes sandbagged. In 1997 there was close to 900 homes sandbagged. Part of it was the government, the premier of the day worried about being at 26.5 as opposed to 24.5, which was—the Roblin limit in Winnipeg was 25.5; the Roblin rule was 25.5. The Filmon rule changed to 24.5. Sandbagging and primary dike system was to 26.5.

The floodway, of course, was within an inch of not being able to accept the water in '97 in terms of an inch of rain or a high wind. And so the floodway is able to deal with a catastrophic flood. This is a serious flood in my view, a serious flooding event, but so far Emerson is—the member opposite—he and I both went to Emerson. Emerson's dike was closed, but the community has not been flooded and the road was open. That one road that we elevated in the early 2000s was elevated, so there was access there.

Rosenort was protected. Riverside, which wasn't part of the post-'97 flood event, wasn't protected and was evacuated. Partly that is a challenge in highway elevations and partly with highway elevations you create flooding in other places, but it's something we're definitely looking at. Rosenort looks like it's

got a very small highway improvement that could be made in terms of some of the concerns. I raise this because it's connected to the floodway.

\* (15:10)

Ste. Agathe was flooded in '97 and wasn't flooded so far. The event is not over. In 2009, we have St. Adolphe, which, and I might say that the farmhouses that former Premier Filmon raised are—so far, most of them have been protected, although people have been isolated and have left their homes. We know of some farm homes that have been flooded and there are questions about what happened to protect them. I haven't got a full analysis, but the majority of those homes have been protected.

Moving to Grande Pointe, of course, which was flooded with very little notice in '97, it has, so far, been protected. We've operated, not just the floodway, but the Seine River Diversion, which, I would point out, was a subject of a former federal government—I did point it out to the Prime Minister that we were fined for having the Seine River go directly into the floodway, which meant that it didn't have to go into people's basements in the Grande Pointe area, and our engineering staff had to take sensitivity training. But I always thought it was better for fish to stay in water than go into somebody's basement. But we did raise that with the Prime Minister.

On the floodway, the two bridges that we're reinstating are the one on 44 and the one on 15, I believe. But we took them out because we were only at \$300 million. We were \$300 million with the former government. One announcement by Prime Minister Chrétien was to include a dredging, and then a second announcement by Minister Rock, it was on behalf of Paul Martin. The second tranche of money, we never got. We got confirmation from Treasury Board and all other entities in the federal government, but during the transition from one government to another, the member opposite would know, that members like James Bezan were opposed to the floodway, and there were concerns in the Ritchot area. So we didn't have anything more than the authorization for 300-million capital.

We pointed out to the Prime Minister that we had protected, to a higher level, St. Adolphe, Ste. Agathe, farmhouses and Grande Pointe. We'd invested some \$6.5 million in Grande Pointe and that we thought it was wise to continue and complete the project. So that's how the negotiations went.



I would remind the members, both the federal and provincial project, and the federal government has mutual authority on the floodway, (a) investment and (b) priorities and (c) scoping and work. It's not been—provincial government answers questions in the House but it's a federal-provincial project.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The Premier made a comment that is an important one just about the expectations of Manitobans and Winnipeggers with respect to the floodway expansion.

Madam Chair, there was, I think, an effort on the part of government, prior to the current flood, to communicate that because of the floodway expansion we would have a better level of protection in the current flood than would have been the case prior to its expansion. Many Winnipeggers and Manitobans are questioning that communication now, in light of the experience recently of not being able to operate the floodway gates because of the ice situation, which was a consequence of the fact that the St. Mary's bridge was low and was creating the risk of ice jamming only one kilometre into the floodway channel. This was creating a risk of water backups in the event that the floodway gate was raised too high, which meant that the gate was having to be kept low for a protracted period of time in order to prevent that risk.

So it is not a matter of whether the work done to date was appropriate. We agree with the work done to date. The issue is whether it was accurate to be advertising that the project was complete. I think that is what the issue is, is what steps remain in order to get to the level of flood protection that Winnipeggers and Manitobans would expect.

We understand the commitment to stay within the budgetary framework that had been agreed to but, on the other hand, water will go where it's going to go. So, if there's going to be value in doing the project, there certainly has to be a commitment toward doing all the things that have been recommended by the engineers.

Can the Premier just indicate why it is that the St. Mary's Road bridge, which spans the floodway, had not been part of the work done to date and whether that is something that is going to be rectified going forward?

**Mr. Doer:** We always operate the floodway—it has always been operating with the goal to have less ice, including in the control structures of the existing floodway which, of course, are in the Red River.

Most people think the gates are actually in the floodway. So right away when you talk about perceptions, and we even had a webcam on it all the way through, we always operate the floodway as much as possible to keep it—in past years I think it was operated with some ice in 1997 and some ice in 1996.

We had no difficulty dealing with the ice in the channel. The excavators work quite well. We had less flood jams in the floodway actually than we had in the river. We had lots of major challenges in the river as the ice, which was unprecedented in its size, went through the river. We had some last week with not being able to use the Assiniboine Diversion as effectively with the Assiniboine managing ice. But I think the St. Mary's bridge channel problem, the floodway to St. Mary's bridge, the inlet or the flood control gates were operating at 95 percent and the water flows on the Saturday where the ice was moving—or the Friday—was moving at close to 100 percent, so there wasn't a big challenge there—the challenge is that the floodway is there—if we had a '97 flood plus two feet, we have now the capacity to handle it, but it wouldn't have consequences for communities south of the floodway.

In 1997, as the Water Commission report stated and then the IGAC, we came within, you know, a whisker of either a windstorm or a major rain of the whole system in Winnipeg being overrun and the floodway not having the capacity to deal with it. In fact, water coming from the floodway back in the backdoor to Winnipeg. So that's why it was recommended that the catastrophic situation of what almost happened in '97 where the protection was thought to be over a one-in-100 years was actually evaluated in engineering terms to be one-in-90 years had to be rectified. So that's what we dealt with. We've still tried to operate the floodway itself in harmony with people south of the floodway. We haven't operated the floodway as Cabinet ministers. We've allowed the engineers that were making decisions in '97, and they have a team of engineers that make recommendations now, to operate it.

I would point out that everything we do also is in concert (a) with people south of the floodway and (b) or equally with people in Winnipeg. We had advice all along about water levels in Winnipeg. There was one challenge, actually not in the south end of the city, but mostly in the North End of the city last week with the ice-jam in the Assiniboine River, but there was a prediction to us that it would go on a certain date. It did. We could've used more, you

know, the floodway capacity is there for a catastrophic flood, one-in-700 years in terms of the excavation.

I didn't want to say one-in-700 years because there's a couple of bridges we're still working on, and we still have the outlet issue and the dredging issue, and I'm sensitive to people north of the floodway. Although people also don't know that East St. Paul, West St. Paul, part of St. Andrews and part of St. Clements is inside the floodway, along with the city of Winnipeg. It's actually inside the floodway. But we try to work in harmony with the communities south of the floodway, and so far, and I say so far because we're still in the middle of the flood event.

\*(15:20)

**Mr. McFadyen:** I think what many Manitobans are struggling with, and these were comments made, to be fair, by the minister and not directly by the Premier, but comments about the level of readiness for this year's flood. Because of the floodway, the \$660 million that has been spent on the floodway work to date was that there was a sense that we would be in a position to handle something that would be as severe as 1997, if not more severe, which the Premier's indicated was a one-in-90-year flood, when in fact, what seems to be happening this year, is that we had a situation with ice, which was a serious one, but not entirely unpredictable. Ice is a feature to one degree or another in Manitoba every spring, and we had not as much water as we had in 1997, which was a one-in-90-year flood.

So we had something less severe than a one-in-90-year flood, and yet, inside Winnipeg, we had the declaration of a state of emergency. We had Winnipeg properties being threatened. We had the prospect of the potential for sewer backups and other damages to property inside the city, which is certainly not as severe as anything that was being confronted in 1950, but more serious than what people would have anticipated for a flood that was less severe than '97 and a one-in-90-year flood.

So, for all the talk of a one-in-700-year floodway, to have the sort of situation arise in a flood that is less severe than a one-in-90-year flood doesn't inspire much confidence in people when the government is talking about one-in-700-year flooding. The expectation with the project is that it would protect both Winnipeg as well as communities upstream and downstream, communities south of Winnipeg as well.

While the floodway project was never billed to provide added protection north—that's a separate set of works—but south of the city, there also would have been an expectation that the added capacity would allow the floodway to operate to a greater degree without as much risk of water backing up to the south. Yet none of these things seem to have come to pass this year. I wonder if the Premier can indicate whether, which seems clear, whether there is more work to be done in order to get the level of protection that the minister was advertising only two months ago.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the floodway is designed for a catastrophic event now, as opposed to a serious flood event. So, if there was flooding over '97, there would be higher water levels south of the city, and there would be evacuations.

The member opposite makes the point about impact south of the city. In '97, Grande Pointe was flooded with no notice because the floodway was cranked up. You know, we got the Farlinger report; I'm sure the member opposite's read it. I certainly did. Morris was evacuated. Ste. Agathe was flooded from the west, not from the river. So I would take exception.

So, in terms of, if you want to argue with me, I'll tell you I've read the report, the Farlinger report, but the flooding did take place. Morris was evacuated in '97. Emerson was evacuated in '97. Rosenort didn't have a flood protection system. So in terms of the harmony, we're trying to work in harmony south and in the floodway. If there was a catastrophic event, the floodway can handle it. I don't want to ever have to be sitting in this Legislature or ever be alive for a one-in-700-year event because it would be massive, massive flooding south of Winnipeg because the flood protection south of Winnipeg has actually been built to '97 plus two feet, not by us. Some of the flooding protection has been built to be greater than that since we were in office, but the—and I remember we had the KGS, I believe it was, appear before the Legislature, the engineering firm did appear.

I remember that most of the criticism I actually got from the members of the Legislature from the other side were about south of Winnipeg, not in Winnipeg. So I actually can go back and pull out all the *Hansard* of all the criticism I received, starting with a Mr. Penner, I believe his name was, and in terms of his comments, you could imagine what he said to me. It wasn't that charitable. But, then, of

course, I had members arguing against the floodway in Selkirk. They know who they were.

I met with the mayor of Selkirk yesterday. I was with him at the opening of the Telus Cup, won by the Winnipeg Thrashers, I might point out, against the Hamilton team, the Hamilton Red Wings, I believe.

We have a situation where a serious flood can be managed and managed in harmony with people south of the floodway, and that's what we're trying to do and that's what, so far, we've been doing. It's not over yet so I don't want to put—this is still a work in progress.

I remember asking the former Premier questions, and it was tough. It was 100,000 could go through the floodway, then it was 60,000, then it was Grande Pointe. He had to make that decision, and I've read the Farlinger report, and I've read the report that dealt with both Ste. Agathe and Grande Pointe. I think one of the challenges we have is the floodway system itself. Most people think the gates are actually on the floodway. They're actually on the river, as the member knows, and hinges in an appropriate way. It's partly from navigation and partly for summer levels of water and partly the work of engineering that Mr. Roblin brought in. Most engineers think that's passed the test of time.

We didn't have any difficulty with the floodway channel. I just want to point that out. It was running between 95 and 100 percent efficiency. It never couldn't do what we needed it to do, but we didn't want to—so far, we'd followed the advice. The Roblin rules are in place. It was an original deal with people south of the floodway the way it worked, because it does back up water. If I'm guilty of operating under the Roblin rules—the only change that's been made from Roblin rules to now, to the Filmon rules, is going from 25.5 James to 24.5. That's what we're trying to do.

We will obviously look at what went—has everything in the flood event been successful? No, because there's challenges in Peguis, and we brought that to the federal government. I would, by the way, I could tell you chapter, verse and place where I met with both governments, including very senior people in the former Liberal government, raised the issue of Peguis, and we've got pretty good flood-proofing.

Petersfield is one place we didn't expect to get hit, because we built that south Winnipeg—Lake Winnipeg wall. By the way, some places in Gimli were built against the advice on where they should

be built on the flood plain—north of Gimli. I'm finding out all kinds of interesting stuff. Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Matlock, Dunnottar communities down to Netley Creek and Petersfield, we built it to '97 plus two feet in 2005, and that was overcome by ice.

Breezy Point has been overwhelmed by ice seven times in the last 11 years. St. Peter's Road, which you hear Mayor Strang talking about, has been overwhelmed three times in the last 10 years. I think that in some of the areas we talked with the Prime Minister about is more certainty with permanent flood protection. Selkirk now, we've had it twice now. Instead of those senior citizens homes getting clay dikes, I'd rather have permanent dikes there. I think Minister Toews is in agreement, and so is James Bezan as well, the federal member of Parliament. I raised that with the Prime Minister as well.

We are trying to work in harmony. There was a last-minute call in the North End of Winnipeg, north being Scotia Street—who also had the option of building dikes, by the way. So, not that there's anything—you know. Glenwood Crescent, I went down and sandbagged on Glenwood Crescent, my old house. I had an obligation, my old house and my neighbour's house. Actually, it wasn't that much compared to '97. It wasn't nearly the wall we had to build in '97.

\*(15:30)

But we'll analyze everything after the event. We're still fighting the flood. The people we're going to sit down with are out there working 24/7. I want to thank the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) for paying tribute to the staff that worked on the Portage Diversion. The staff we have, and you've met them, have been unbelievable, worked long hours. I think the EMO just took one day off in the last 36 days, and I just want to publicly thank them. I privately thanked them, I just want to put it on the record that Manitobans are well served by people that have worked for a long period of time, through different administrations, to make good engineering decisions including part of the design.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The work that's being done currently is remarkable, both by volunteers and municipal leaders, as well as the EMO and staff of government departments that are engaged in this.

The challenge they always have is that they have to work with the tools that they're provided, in part

by government, as they are attempting to make judgment calls. So we are at this stage—and I think that there will be opportunity as we go down the road to take a look back on what went well and what didn't. We acknowledge that many things have gone well in this year's effort to fight the flood. Lots of people have done a lot of very good things, but they are limited in terms of the tools that they're provided.

One of the questions that people are asking relates to the fact that we've got bridge work not complete over the floodway. The first number of kilometres of the floodway channel haven't yet been widened and so this created a situation where there isn't as much capacity in the first stretch of the floodway as there might have been. It's really a question about going forward and bringing it up to the level of capacity that would be required to meet the challenge.

I guess I would just reiterate the concern that we're hearing from people who are asking about the investment of \$660 million and why it is that even with less water, we seem to be in a situation similar to that of '97, with sandbagging and other threats to property inside the city as well as south of the city. Recognizing there are only three places the water can go once it reaches the floodway control structure: one is through the city of Winnipeg; the other is through the floodway channel; and the third is to back up into the communities south of the control structure. The understanding of many Manitobans was that the floodway channel would have much more capacity, thereby relieving the threat to both Winnipeg and communities south of Winnipeg. That doesn't seem to have happened in this flood. So the statements about providing protection in a catastrophic situation seem to be running into credibility problems when we see the lack of protection in a flood that is even less severe than '97, even with all the work that's been done.

Our sense and the advice that we're getting and certainly the review of engineering studies that have been done along the way would suggest that it's not that anything done to date has been improper; it's simply that there are more things that need to be done to get to the level that people would expect. That's been the history from 1950 is that a lot of work was done after that flood, and then lessons were learned after '79 and more work was done. Even more lessons were learned after '97 and to the credit of both the current and previous government, much work has been done since '97. We saw that in Emerson and in Morris and in other communities. I

want that acknowledged on the record as well that much has been done since '97 to improve flood protection in this province. I guess where we're trying to get to is a sense of the lessons to be learned from 2009 in terms of the next steps in this work in progress, which it always will be in the development of flood protection.

In accordance with that theme of flood protection being a work in progress, one of the observations made by the climate and geography experts is that we seem to be in a cycle of extremes, of extreme flooding one year, drought in other years, as a consequence of climate change and its impact on the watershed. I'm wondering if the Premier would look at the possibility of a study into providing reservoirs through the Red River Valley to store water in years like this in order to make water available in the dry years as one additional measure that could be considered to both fight floods in the wet years and provide for needed water in the dry years as a potential matter for consideration on a go-forward basis.

**Mr. Doer:** I would point out the tools recommended by KGS to the Legislature, and we had an all-party sitting of the Legislature. All members had access to the same engineers I had access to, did recommend notches at the front end of the floodway to make some improvements. Those were implemented as they had recommended.

Secondly, in terms of tools, we'll look at everything, you know, right from—we'll look even south of the border. I notice Governor Hoeven is talking about the road on the border right now. He was in the American media. Although we provided some ideas about how he could be helpful on Devils Lake and we could be helpful on some of the other issues, our water people sometimes have to be very vigilant on our road, which the Americans claim has no cars on it. I don't agree at all, but we have improved some of the culverts to try to be fair.

We'll look at everything all the way along. It looks like the damage to farm homes is much greater south of here than here. It looks like some of the evacuations in smaller communities are greater, but we'll have to take a look. So far, and as I say, the member opposite says '97. I was sandbagging my home as it was changed for the third time, and I don't begrudge anybody for changing it. The same day as people were there helping, Grande Pointe went down. My secretary's dad and mother lived in

Grande Pointe, and they were bobbing in little rowboats carrying two little sandbags over to Grande Pointe.

So, you know, I know that Premier Filmon had to make that decision because they were within inches of cranking up the floodway over the state of nature, and Winnipeg would have been dramatically flooded. People talk about the military. That's why they were here, to evacuate people. They did other things, very useful things. So I don't agree with the member's assessment when we look at the whole—I have to be the Premier for the whole province and so did the former Premier. If you can have a choice of using one asset a little bit less to not create problems, you know, at the state of nature, those are the rules we're supposed to operate under. If there's a catastrophic situation, then you're supposed to operate under evacuation rules for people outside of the floodway. That's what happened in '97, except for Grande Pointe and Ste. Agathe. Two places weren't evacuated and were clobbered.

Some people chose to—when we're dealing with Mother Nature, we're also dealing with human nature. I remember going to Rosenort. The Premier had put in an emergency. He'd declared a state of emergency with the whole province. Then he asked me to come with him to Rosenort. I now know why. Nobody wanted to leave. That's a tough situation because Mother Nature is something we can't manage, but human nature is challenging in itself. We saw that even in Breezy Point. People were asked to evacuate on Friday. Machinery came in on Saturday and half left and half stayed. With that ice and that water coming at them after the machinery was brought in to take them out, they put both themselves and rescuers at risk. That's more serious to me, and I'll be clear. Our criteria are life and limb first, property second, convenience and commerce third, individual personal property, and I'm sure those were the same criteria Premier Filmon used as well.

\* (15:40)

We have operated the floodway consistent with the rules. Now, if we had an event that developed from, I think it was three weeks ago, Fargo flooded. If we had an event after Fargo that had more floods, more Colorado lows, more water, we actually did get into a '97-plus event. We would have had evacuations because the access on roads would have been compromised. I saw one reporter say, oh, the

road was almost closed in Morris. Well, either Highway 23 is open or it's closed.

So if there is a catastrophic event—and I hope I don't have to live through it. I'm sure Premier Roblin never wanted to live through a 1950 flood when he built that device to protect us from 1950. I'm sure he was—nobody thought, in '97, that we would have an event past 1950 and the floodway may not make it. That's what we were dealing with. The two recommendations were the Ste. Agathe dam which, again, would have flooded people south. That was the cheaper option. Former Mayor Murray was recommending it.

The safest option was the Ste. Agathe dam. It would have been cheaper and Winnipeg would have been high and dry forever. I think, again, because of the principle of working in harmony with people south of you, we're all one province. As the Premier you try to work with everybody. And that's what we're trying to do, that we have protection for a catastrophic flood. We will not have to evacuate 400,000 people from Winnipeg, but we will have to evacuate people from other places if we had that kind of water.

I think that's hard to communicate. I agree with the member, but I would point out in Winnipeg there were 900 people sandbagging at a much higher level. Three times, the numbers changed. It changed from Friday. The flood took place in Grand Forks on Saturday, and I know this personally because I actually had to sandbag different times, and more people sandbagged higher levels in '97. Then we did add 60, and the mayor properly called a state of emergency. Nineteen communities in Manitoba have a state of emergency, maybe more now. They should have a state of emergency.

You need the right to go in—you know, I was actually surprised—anyway, I'm not going to second-guess but you should have a state of emergency. You need the right to secure property. We actually had a state of emergency twice in the summer in Winnipeg because of high water levels. We actually have used the floodway three times in the summer and I would suggest when you look at this—you know, to protect, try to take some pressure off the obvious sewer system that we all are aware of in the city of Winnipeg. Twice, I think, the mayor declared a state of emergency in the summer, and that was the right thing to do because you're only as strong as your weakest link in those low-lying areas, some of whom

have been asked and money was going to be provided for diking.

So people chose some places to dike and some people chose not to dike. On my street they chose to take their dikes down to take a better look at the river, and some of us chose to keep our dikes up. I always liked a little kind of peak-and-valley kind of thing. Maybe I'm old-fashioned; I don't believe in taking down a protection.

**Mr. McFadyen:** And Manitobans understand. I find it remarkable when you speak to people in communities south of Winnipeg as some in—there were leaders in St. Adolphe that we spoke to a couple of weeks ago who acknowledged the benefit of the floodway for the city of Winnipeg, and the fact that there's no sense in any community south of Winnipeg that we shouldn't have a floodway, and that steps shouldn't be taken to protect the city of Winnipeg.

Certainly, what the communities are looking for, though, is that there is a sense of responsibility taken for both mitigating and/or compensating those communities when that floodway is put into operation. I think that the fair-mindedness of people when they discuss the floodway is something I find remarkable and it's a quality of Manitobans that is an admirable one.

But the point is that those operating the floodway and making these decisions have a certain number of tools available to them. They've got a certain amount of water coming at them and then there are judgment calls that need to be made about where that water is going to go. We certainly understand that those are hard calls to make, and they make those calls under difficult circumstances, and they have to balance various interests when they make them. I think what we all seek is some improvement in the tools that are available to them as we go forward and that's really the focus of the questions.

I had indicated to the Member for River Heights that we would make some time available. He had some questions that he wanted to put to the Premier, so I'll turn it over to the Member for River Heights for a period of time, but I appreciate the responses from the Premier and will come back with some more questions later. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** One of the questions that will come up is the situation at Peguis. Colin Williams, who was their flood co-ordinator,

said that they didn't sandbag because they were told there was only going to be minor flooding.

I wonder if the Premier can tell us, you know, what happened and was indeed there sort of a miscalculation in terms of the extent of flooding there and the level of warning.

**Mr. Doer:** First of all, in terms of Peguis, the big picture is that we've gone to the former federal government and to this government asking for long-term flood protection to Peguis similar to what we have south of Winnipeg. The Fisher River—and I don't know how many times it—I don't know whether the member opposite represented the constituency when—I think he did represent Peguis when he was the federal Minister of Science. The Fisher River floods all the time and it affects homes in and around the river, and we asked the federal government at the highest level—I personally asked at the highest level—to have a long-term flood-proof plan. I even raised it in Kelowna. It was televised. So, you know, the whole issue.

We finally got agreement from the previous Treasury Board Minister to have a LiDAR study of the area. But the LiDAR study says what we already know: that Peguis—I remember one engineer, I think it was one official, I actually think it was a federal government official, but it doesn't matter, said to me, they shouldn't have chosen to live there. I remember raising this with Prime Minister Martin and, of course, they didn't choose to live there. They had the high ground. They chose to live on the high ground and saved—and this is not Tartan Day—the Scottish settlers. But we have Scots in the room.

The challenge here is that we have flooding on the Fisher River every second or third year. There needs to be adequate flood protection. So when members say there's going to be flooding similar to previous years, which they did, and we sent ice-breaking machines out there, which we did, and we offered them a number of water tubes but they wanted to try them first and not have a bunch more. The system was—the people were overwhelmed. I think I'll get a report on the forecasting, but there were a lot of meetings between—there was a lot of information to the federal government, INAC. We work with INAC, I believe, and there's another body in government, you might remember, that works in the federal government.

So we have a problem. We have, in my view—and in Roseau River we also have a challenge. Just so the member opposite—we'll deal with both of

them. After the '97 flood, there was a dike built in Roseau River, and it's been built too close to the river. So it represents, in our engineer's view, a little bit more of a risk to people there. So you have an earlier evacuation. I think the people in Roseau River are going back today, and I think people in Fisher River are going back today.

But the Fisher River and the location of Peguis is not compatible to be dry. We need a macro solution to it, and we've argued this with the federal government since I've been in office. I'm sure the member opposite probably heard that when he was in office, I'm not sure. But there is no plan, proper plan, for Peguis. So then you get episodic flooding: some of it is higher some years and some of it's lower; some of it's ice-induced and some of it isn't; and some of it's questions on drainage ditches, but if you fix that, you flood other communities.

\* (15:50)

We're trying to look at all those solutions, but we were just trying to help the national government, who has—the national government placed the people in Peguis in that site, and I think they have a moral, historical responsibility to solve this issue. I think the member opposite would agree.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The Premier is correct that I did, in fact, represent Peguis when I was a member of Parliament, and I came to believe, as the Premier does, that there needs to be a long-run solution to the situation in Peguis and the Fisher River.

That needs to happen, and if there is any opportunity when I can work together with the Premier to do everything we can to get that achieved, then I'm ready to do whatever I can. I'm raising it because I believe that there needs to be a long-run solution there, and I'm ready to do whatever I can to try and achieve that.

My second question deals with the projected revenues in the budget for corporate income taxes. Traditionally, when we've got a recession, corporate income taxes fall off quite dramatically, and, indeed, the three quarter report, third quarter financial report, from the government last year suggests that the income from corporate income tax for the first three quarters of the last fiscal year, which was just completed, were down from the previous year at \$253 million, and they've gone down this last year to \$227 million. You can't always interpret what happens in the first three quarters to the end, but it suggests that we may be starting to see a falloff in

corporate income tax revenues. By comparison to the 1990s recession, the budget, in my view, predicts considerably more corporate income tax revenue and less falloff for the coming year than we're likely to get.

I would just like to ask the Premier whether he has reviewed this, and whether he has any updated information and whether he has a concern.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the numbers are produced by the Department of Finance, and they normally produce them, dare I say it to the member opposite, on a conservative basis, small "c." The last five years, the revenue projections we've had overall, have exceeded the projections we had in our budget. We've actually haven't had a year, since '01 with the 9/11 event where—I think the '03 year with a drought, we had a serious challenge in the agricultural sector. But, so far, I think we've had a four-, five-year run now where the revenues from all tax entities and growth in the economy have exceeded the budget.

So, in terms of dealing with the Department of Finance, my experience with them has been that the professional civil servants that provide the numbers to us have been more accurate and more prudent.

Are we concerned about the economy? Yes. The numbers in our budget are produced by experts, and not that we're not—I mean, this Chamber has some thoughts that are worthy of paying tribute to—but they generate the numbers, and, obviously, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), I think who you admit is a very intelligent man, very qualified, very credible, that goes with the numbers, and so far, as I say, the last five years, he's exceeded the revenue numbers that have been in the budget, not underachieved. If it was a kind of opposite where every year we had a problem, yes, I'd be very concerned.

But, do we have challenges? Yes. Challenges, generally. I'm not answering questions on the corporate revenue line because there are some corporate revenues that are way, way down from last year. Mining revenues, for example, is indirectly in the corporate line and it's directly in the mining revenue line. So there are some that are down over last year. But we were smart enough to put some of that money in the rainy day fund from last year. In the '07-08 year, we put extra money, over \$100 million in the rainy day fund.

*Honourable Bill Blaikie, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Gerrard:** My third question deals with the policy of Manitoba Hydro. I learned that when they're clearing the hydro line going from Wuskwatim to The Pas, that they are burning the trees and the brush instead of mulching them, which would be a much better environmental practice.

I wonder if you'd comment.

**Mr. Doer:** The bottom line is that I did not know that. So I will ask the question. In this world, if you don't know, you shouldn't pretend that you do, at least in our jobs.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I look forward to getting some feedback after you've made the enquiries.

We've had, over the last several years, quite a bit of discussion about Jordan's Principle. I know you've worked with the federal government on this issue, and I'm just wondering if you could provide an update on the current situation, how things are working in terms of the agreement that was announced last fall.

**Mr. Doer:** I'm not sure of any specifics, of cases or examples, where a matter of service has been in dispute after the service has been provided. I like the idea, and so far, from the provincial government's perspective, the offloading that started, before this government, on the air ambulance and other ambulance fees for Aboriginal people and, actually, First Nations people in urban centres. I think that will be our first test case, because we feel the decision made by Ujjal Dosanjh, under his administration, was wrong. So we paid that bill to the city, who carried the load, or carried the load of the expenditure in terms of patient care.

I'm not aware of other examples but, certainly, the example that led to Jordan's Principle is very valid, that we should provide the service and argue about the jurisdiction and the expenditures after.

This is something that other provinces are interested in, too. The Northwest Territories raised at our Western Premiers' meeting the view, and they had even a higher example of cases where the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government was not being implemented and, therefore, Jordan's Principle was the problem, in the sense that if people argue about who's going to pay the bill instead of providing the service first, it's wrong.

We have this arbitration process now, or the dispute resolution mechanism, and we're going to

live with it, and we think it's good. Hopefully, everybody in the field knows that as well. But I'm glad the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) got that policy, and I think it's really important for the country.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Gerrard:** From what I'm hearing, and I pass that on, is that, although the people who have been covered are continuing to be covered, that adding new people on is not always going as smoothly as it might. There's concern about the process, and, certainly, that there's a considerable number of children who have disabilities but maybe not being severe enough are not being considered. So I think that there is still considerable work to do here and follow-up that's needed.

Let me ask a follow-up question related to ambulance: In Grand Rapids, because it is not classified as an adequately high level health centre, the people are having to pay ambulance fees when they are taken to The Pas. So that's a considerable cost for people from Grand Rapids who need an ambulance transfer to The Pas. I wonder if the Premier is aware of the situation and whether he's looked into this and made any decisions as to what should be done.

**Mr. Doer:** First of all, back to Jordan's Principle. If the members are aware of a gap, I'd ask them to please let us know. I'd rather have 57 people help working on the implementation of this principle rather than just the members of the government side. It is after all services to people, First Peoples, and I think that's very important. On the ambulance service, sometimes we deploy ambulances adjacent to First Nations. For example, we moved an ambulance out of Gladstone to Sandy Bay right across—you know, in terms of not encroaching upon federal responsibility, just put it on the provincial highway so that an ambulance would be available. The issue of cost is one thing, but the issue of an ambulance going—is it an ambulance going from Grand Rapids to The Pas, or is it an ambulance that comes from The Pas to Grand Rapids and goes back to The Pas? Because our concern is first of all patient safety, and so, in terms of the specifics of his question, I need more information.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Gerrard:** My understanding is that it's an ambulance going from Grand Rapids to The Pas serving people who are not on the reserve with a



First Nations community but who are on the community adjacent and that when somebody is sick and needs emergency medical care, there'll be two alternatives: to fly them out coming south or to transfer them out, and that if it was considered a high enough level health centre then it would be an interfacility transfer and the ambulance would be covered, but because it's not, as I understand it, the latest information I have, and people are having to pay that cost or being billed for it.

Let me follow up with another issue. In I think virtually every state in the United States now there is universal screening of newborns for hearing problems. And there are other jurisdictions in Canada with screening, universal hearing screening of newborns. It's important to pick up these children very early on. When you identify them with the screening, then you can adjust and you can help these children to learn, because the early development over the first two or three years occurs in such a way that when they're not hearing their development doesn't proceed normally, and you can't then turn the clock back. So we have a bill which we will be moving to second reading which is for universal screening of newborns for hearing. Would the Premier recognize the importance of doing this and be ready to support this bill?

**Mr. Doer:** I don't want to pre-empt the debate that is going to proceed and the eloquence that the member opposite will display in the presentation of the bill. So, you know, and I'll certainly get some advice on it from the Health Department and the Education Department.

I've always got an open mind. The member opposite knows there've been bills before that the Liberals have introduced that we've improved upon and then presented ourselves. You know, I think we have a bill on second-hand smoke for children, and unlike the Ottawa situation, where the Liberals take all the ideas from the NDP, we think it's rather reciprocal here in Manitoba. So the member opposite brings in good ideas, we've got an open mind, always have an open mind. We listen more than we talk. So, in terms of universal hearing, we prefer to listen rather than talk.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, I thank the Premier on that. There is a significant issue in north Winnipeg at the moment with the overnight closing of the Seven Oaks emergency room. I understand that the Premier is set on the pattern of keeping that closed overnight.

Just to give the Premier the opportunity to confirm that that's his position.

**Mr. Doer:** As I understand the question, am I set on the overnight closing of the emergency ward at Seven Oaks in the North End? Well, it's not closed. The emergency ward, as I understand it—I'll double-check that—but I think the emergency ward is open.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, the Seven Oaks emergency room has been closed for quite a number of services overnight, and people are being shipped to the Health Sciences Centre. So he might have a look at that.

Let me move on to—

**Mr. Doer:** I want to—if I can respond to that. The member said closed for a number of services, but there's still a triage nurse there and there's deployment of doctors to the Seven Oaks Hospital 24 hours a day, seven days a week, I believe. So if the member opposite has different information—I know, for example, if patients are stabilized, say, in Concordia Hospital and they have a cardiac arrest after they're stabilized, or if they need major operations, et cetera, they go, 24/7, to St. Boniface.

So you could argue that the services on, you know, one medical procedure is different at St. Boniface than it is at Concordia, but if it's the best—some people argue it's even one of the best in Canada, the cardiac care there—with the proper doctors to deal with the immediate, doctors and nurses to deal with the immediate at the other hospital, the community hospital, then I would leave that advice to medical doctors about what services are best delivered in one place. So, my information is that the North End Seven Oaks Hospital emergency ward has the lights on.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Follow up the question dealing with the situation of crime in Leaf Rapids. Ed Charrier, who's the mayor, was here earlier on today and was meeting with a number of people. It's been pretty serious. The number of people who've been jailed for criminal activities has been extraordinarily high in the last little while.

Just to ask the Premier what his plans are with respect to helping the mayor and the community in Leaf Rapids.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Doer:** As I understand it, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) met with the mayor today. I haven't had a debrief about what they both agreed to.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I know that the Premier has taken the position with respect to people with intellectual disabilities that there are significant numbers of people with intellectual disabilities who should stay in institutions like the Manitoba Developmental Centre. As the Premier knows, the Association of Community Living has a human rights complaint which they have raised. I wonder what the Premier's position is going to be moving forward over the next several years with respect to the situation of the Manitoba Developmental Centre.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, first of all I want to make the point, as a volunteer for years in Special Olympics, I believe that citizens that have the challenge the member opposite mentioned, and their families, are best served in the community. I believe the optimum location for anyone, if possible, is in the community. The member opposite will know two facts: one is we closed Pelican Lake and de-institutionalized every resident there, and we were criticized considerably, but, I think, that decision has proven to be the right one. Secondly, I think we've doubled the amount of money going into community services and reduced the population of the Manitoba Development Centre considerably.

So if you have the closure of one centre and the reduction in people in another centre, with the intake in the Development Centre being very small relative to the past and, regrettably, the death rate at Portage, of course, is lower than the general population in terms of average age, although there are seniors there at the centre.

There has been a bit of an overall reduction—a dramatic reduction in intake and a dramatic increase in community living started, by the way, by Muriel Smith, the minister, the former Deputy Premier. There are challenges at the Manitoba developmental school in terms of the safety of people there, fire safety, other mobility issues. So we were trying to manage that. What are some challenges in terms of the geriatric population? Can there be other ways of dealing with people at the Manitoba development school? I would say that there are going to be people at the site of Portage la Prairie, staff, residents, but will it be in the kind of traditional ways of which we've had in the past? I'm sure the minister's looking at that. I don't want to pre-empt the minister. Overall, I think we've actually, from where we were a few years ago, exceeded the community placements from where we were three or four years ago, partially because of the closing of Pelican Lake and partially

because of the assertive strategy to invest in community places and community resources.

So, to me, the continuum of care should be based on the individual people, but the overall goal is to have—I think there was 2,000 people at the Portage Manitoba Development Centre when Muriel Smith began the policy of community places, new directions—I forget the name of the program. Every person that can live in a community should live in a community. That's our view. People that have high vulnerabilities to their—should have that kind of high vulnerability care. I can't say much more than that, except to say that in terms of people living in the communities, as in terms of our projections a few years ago, the number of people living in the community is higher and the number of people living in, quote, institutional care, unquote, is lower.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Just to move on to another subject, I'm looking for some clarification on your view of moving forward with respect to provincial support for rapid transit and the development of rapid transit in Winnipeg.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the first issue with rapid is the word "rapid" transit, because all the research shows that to give people options to take a public transportation system, you need—cost is one factor, time is a second factor, convenience is the third factor. So all of those issues are very, very important to get ridership up with people in a transportation system.

If you add in weather—not that we ever worry about our weather in Manitoba—that's also a factor in any kind of system, and it should be part of the design. When former Mayor Glen Murray and I discussed the infrastructure proposal, we had former Treasury Board Minister, Reg Alcock, and we had an agreement that 50 percent of the money would go to sewage treatment, some of which has already been allocated in the West End treatment plant. The federal government and ourselves both agreed to nitrogen and phosphorus. The second proposal was the Kenaston underpass, which, you could argue, was certainly a priority from the former federal Treasury Board Minister, as one can imagine, and the third priority was the rapid transit. So we agreed to a package of proposals. The provincial priority was the sewage treatment, to start doing something about Lake Winnipeg.

The proposal from the former mayor was a dedicated lane through the Confusion Corner down Pembina Highway. That was put on hold by the mayor, and he argued that the money should go to:

(a) it wasn't a rapid transit system; and (b) the money should go to recreation because there were needed community centres that had no money. One of which did receive money is Bronx Park, which has got considerable funding in it.

We now have a new proposal from the mayor. There's \$17 million of federal money from the federal budget of '08-09. There is matching money from the provincial government, and, thirdly, money from the City of Winnipeg for the capital. Partly the way they want to finance the rapid transit is to use tax increment financing to partially develop a revenue stream and real estate decisions in and around the kind of density that you would see with a rapid transit station all the way from downtown Winnipeg, one spoke to the University of Winnipeg, I believe. It changes because the city is the primary agent to this proposal, and then eventually through a different alternative route than Confusion Corner. They're dealing with real estate issues on Pembina Highway and then eventually a dedicated route to the University of Manitoba. I would hope right to the campus because that also affects the football stadium that's proposed there as well. That's the state of it.

In terms of whether it will be bus or something else, the mayor has stated his statement that it would be minimum bus, but it might be something else. I haven't talked to the mayor recently of where they've landed on that. They wanted to do more work from the initial announcement we had, I believe, in September of 2008. One of the issues, though, that the member should know that in the Kyoto bill that we brought in—I don't know whether the member voted for it or not. I'll have to check the record. It included two things that Mayor Miller, for example, in Toronto, thinks are very good. One: a guarantee that operating losses of any transit system in Winnipeg, Brandon, Flin Flon, Thompson, would be covered by the provincial government 50 percent; and, two: that if there's ever a rapid transit system, the operating losses would be covered as well under the Kyoto bill that we brought in.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Gerrard:** We supported the Kyoto bill, believing and arguing for many years that there needed to be targets, so even though we didn't necessarily agree with precisely the way that you set the targets—we felt they should be more frequent targets—we did support that.

What I was particularly interested in was, moving forward from the first leg of rapid transit to

the University of Manitoba, to what extent the province would be looking at supporting additional rapid transit corridors.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, we definitely believe that, when the city decides what kind of delivery system it will be—not just the dedicated lane on a road—whatever delivery system it will be, we should have spokes into other parts of the city. I think the one area we're talking about, where there is a lot of land, is out to northeast Winnipeg, particularly Transcona, with the land that's available. I think that's also what the city's talking about. There is a second leg of this, as the member's described it, and, obviously, as a government that represents all four sections of Winnipeg, we want a leg in each quadrant—for rapid transit reasons, of course, for no other reasons but for good transportation. Why should my children not be able to ride the rapid transit of the future just because they live in beautiful northeast Winnipeg, he would say rhetorically.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Talking about northeast Winnipeg, there's been a fair amount of discussion about the Disraeli Freeway and when that closes for repairs, and I guess some have said that they didn't want it to be closed at all. Maybe I can get the Premier's view on what should happen with the Disraeli Freeway when it's repaired.

**Mr. Doer:** My views on the repairs. Well, I saw the member opposite's views. I wonder if he's going to correct the record in the Elmwood by-election about some of the outrageous slurs that took place. Will he be correcting that record that he knows is factually not correct about the eminent Member for Elmwood (Mr. Blaikie) now?

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, I think it was very clear in the early stages of the Elmwood by-election that the Member for Elmwood, who's been elected—and we congratulate him—was making it very clear that this was a city issue, and he was suggesting that it shouldn't be politicized. Well, I mean, as you the Premier well know, an issue like that needs the involvement of people who are political leaders, so I'm just asking the Premier whether he's got a view on this going forward and what that view is.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, there was a Liberal pamphlet that stated that the Member for Elmwood now was receiving a salary from the University of Winnipeg, which was incorrect. I know that the former minister from—a colleague of his in Cabinet—could correct that record, so I'm hoping that the Liberals will mail out an apology and a correction to a person who was

donating all his service to the University of Winnipeg in a very, very dignified way. I'm sure the member will do that, because he wouldn't want something to be out there in cyberspace forever that was wrong.

Secondly, on the Disraeli Bridge—I think that the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Blaikie) has a good grasp on some of the solutions, and he is a solution-oriented person. He will work with all of us on our team to work with the City of Winnipeg. He said he would work constructively with the mayor. That was his pledge in the campaign. He didn't say he would take the job of the mayor. He wasn't running for mayor; he wasn't running for city council; he was running to be the MLA for Elmwood. He succeeded and he said he would find a constructive way of dealing with it, and that is a challenge, but I believe he's up to it.

**Mr. Gerrard:** We certainly look forward to that. Let me move on to the outstanding—

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, you didn't ask for a question about the pamphlet.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, we can deal with that further in due course.

The Lake Winnipegosis fishery is a pickerel fishery which has had trouble for many, many years. There has essentially been no progress under the Premier in 10 years. It seems like people around Lake Winnipegosis are kind of forgotten by the Premier. There's no plan to address the decimation of the Lake Winnipegosis fishery that occurred quite a number of years ago. It was the third-highest pickerel producer in North America for many years, and right now it's way down the list. I don't know exactly what the number would be but it would be maybe 50th or something instead of No. 3 in terms of lakes and pickerel production.

What is the Premier doing with respect to this?

**Mr. Doer:** First of all I want to thank *Field and Stream* magazine for designating Manitoba as the best freshwater fishing destination. We were always challenged by the Northwest Territories, but their publication, the last one I read, we were doing quite well in spite of the member's comments.

Secondly, the last time I met with people around the lake, the biggest concern they had about pickerel sustainability was crow ducks, and I'll look at the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), but I

understand crow ducks were the biggest issue to the pickerel stock. Some people think one species should be reduced so another species can increase. Is it the member's view that we should reduce the number of crow ducks on Lake Winnipegosis?

**Mr. Gerrard:** The proper name of the bird is cormorants, double-crested cormorants, to be precise. The science would show now quite clearly that the increase in the number of cormorants is the result of overfishing and depleting the number of pickerel.

Essentially what happens is when you fish the pickerel, and you decimate the numbers, you have a lot of minnows which are good food for cormorants. The cormorants replace the pickerel which have been removed. It is not a complicated ecosystem, but there are now very good studies which suggest that it's not the way the minister or the Premier has suggested but, in fact to some extent, it's the other way around. Removing the pickerel set the stage for the numbers of cormorants to increase, and they are the result not the cause.

I have an allocation of time which is now up, so I'm going to hand it over to, I think, it's the Member for Morris.

\* (16:30)

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Before I begin some of the questions that I have, I just want to recognize the number of people that have worked so hard in fighting the flood waters both south of the city and through Winnipeg and north of the city—lots of volunteers and lots of municipal officials and government employees that have done a good job.

I do want to also say that I've been through my constituency of Morris and it's just a sea out there. It's unbelievable. People are boating and trying to actually drive through some low waters. Being a resilient group of people that have seen seven floods in 14 years, they certainly know a lot about floods and what to expect. They recognize, of course too, the floodway is there for a reason. They understand that it's there to protect the city of Winnipeg and they have no issue with that. They do also want to be recognized for the sacrifices that they make, too, when they are flooded and just want to be treated fairly.

I get a lot of questions posed to me just because people are vigilant in watching what is going on. Because they've had, as I say, seven floods in 14 years, they watch the mechanics of operations

very closely. They watch water levels very closely. They keep records from event to event. When I ask some technical questions, it's because these are questions that people have asked me, and I feel that, even though we still have the event going on and it's important to make sure that we manage this event as best as possible, there are still some questions that people would like to know just for implications once the event passes.

I'd like to ask a question just about artificial versus natural levels. I'd like to know what is the level against which natural versus artificial flooding is determined when the floodway gate is operated.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I don't want to get a technical answer. The rules were established by former Premier Roblin, the Roblin rules, and they've been modified once by Premier Filmon in terms of Winnipeg levels. As the member knows, and she's cited it a couple of question periods ago, there is a report produced at the end of any operation of the floodway by the five engineers that are working within those rules. There has to be any documentation about whether the floodway is operated over the state of nature, they call it, in terms of the projected water levels in places south. I don't want to take the job of five engineers that are going to write a report. Those people have written reports in the past. The member opposite would have read them.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I know that several of my constituents are following this very closely, watching levels day to day against their own measurements and just their own experiences. One of the questions that I did ask, as the Premier has indicated, was—I know that at the end of an event, by June 30 every year, there is a report that goes to the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) detailing the gate usage daily, a daily log of operation, I believe, that it's called. I'm wondering why that information would not be available daily. Daily we get reports of water levels at James Street and various places along the river, but this daily log of the operation is not available until June 30, and I'm wondering why it would not be public information daily like other information.

**Mr. Doer:** The report will be public and that's something we've committed to. I don't know whether it happened in the past. We've provided a report at the end of the operation of the floodway.

There are five engineers working on all of the infrastructure across Manitoba. Probably most of them haven't got more than two or three hours sleep

in the last three weeks, and it's not just dealing with south of Winnipeg, they're dealing with north of Winnipeg, they're dealing with the tributaries west of Winnipeg, they're dealing with the Souris River, they're dealing with all kinds of other rivers east of our province, they'll be dealing with the North Saskatchewan River and the Ralls Island issue soon, so we will make it public. They're not spending time writing reports; they're spending time fighting a flood. All of it is documented and will be available.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I know that there is a number of people that are working very, very hard to deal with the flooding throughout the province, but I know this is information that is recorded daily, so just like a lot of the levels that we hear about in the various news releases daily, I know it's recorded daily, so my question was just—I was wondering why it wouldn't be made public daily, but I do recognize that it will come later. It's just a question that has been brought up because people are actually looking for that information.

The Premier indicated that there was a group of five engineers who made the decisions. I'm just wondering when there's a decision made, for example, to operate the floodway, if there is a group of people that make that decision, and does it have to be a unanimous decision?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, there's technical advice, there's an ADM in charge and it follows the chain of command. Our view is, in government—I guess in terms of the political side—there is a set of rules established, there are environmental licences established. The rules were established—I call them the Roblin rules. They have been modified a bit. The member opposite would know this. In '97, they were changed a bit to go from 25.5 James in Winnipeg to 24.5. That obviously has impact where the member is talking about. People have been pretty clear in everyday reports on the 24.5. There's a requirement to report on the state of nature, which is part of the rules. Further to that, if there's any change in the state of nature, there will be, under the law, people eligible for compensation under the law that we brought in, in terms of the floodway.

I would point out that we haven't had an evacuation of Morris, we haven't had an evacuation of Ste. Agathe. The member opposite knows that story. We haven't had an evacuation of St. Adolphe. These are points I was making to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) just a few moments ago—and we haven't had an evacuation of Grande

Pointe. I think you heard me answer the question last week that we're trying to work in harmony, and that's what we're trying to do. I think the report in June—well, I'm not going to say anything because the event's not over yet. I mean, we're dealing with—you know, I know as a citizen I didn't like what happened in Grande Pointe. I'm hoping that won't happen again and we're working very hard to both invest beforehand and work within the Roblin rules.

\*(16:40)

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I think what the Premier has said, when you're talking about state of nature levels, I think that is what people are looking at because there's a lot of anxiety about. I mean, people still, obviously, are maybe not flooded and maybe not evacuated, but still are going to deal with the after-effects of this event for several weeks if not longer, so they're looking ahead as to what is the cutoff level. Will they be able to go for compensation? Would they not be able to go for compensation? That's the question, I guess, for many people, and, certainly, I'm starting to hear it from people that are affected. Businesses in the town of Morris tell me that they're down 50 to 90 percent in their business just because of the closure of the highway and the closure of the ring dike, and, of course, the high water event, which they like to refer to it in Morris.

Perhaps, Madam Chair, the Premier could indicate, will there be—I know that some increase in compensation was announced yesterday, doubling of some of the compensation, but I'm wondering about compensation for business interruption, loss of business due to an event like this. Will that be considered in this package?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, we will sit down with the federal government. We did alert them to some of the issues that have already been announced. The federal minister has met with Minister Ashton, and we will be—I believe the federal minister is going to be in town soon, and I'm not exactly sure of the date. I don't want to pre-empt what the federal government will do. It will be a 90-10 program because we'll be well over \$5 million.

The first million is usually the municipality; 2 to 5 million is our responsibility, but it will be a 90-10 event. The Prime Minister obviously reiterated his support, or reaffirmed his federal government support when he was here a week ago today, in terms of protection.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** A couple of weeks ago the Premier was in Morris and part of the discussion there, it was just to do an update on flood preparedness at that time. The discussion did come around to Highway 75 and the fact that the last time Highway 75 was closed was 2006. Now, three years later, we're still dealing with the same issues. I want to recognize there's been a lot of improvements made onto Highway 75, but the fact still remains that during these events that have become more than actual nuisance floods, the highway is closed. The Premier did indicate to Mayor Hoffman at that time that a plan for Highway 75 was in progress.

I'd like to ask the Premier what plans his government has for Highway 75 to keep it open during high water flooding events, recognizing that it is the major corridor into the province from the south through the major port at Emerson, and is considered by many, by most I would say, to be an integral part of the transportation hub, CentrePort Canada, at the airport.

**Mr. Doer:** The member opposite will know this is something that's gone back before our time. I've actually acquainted myself—to familiarize myself with some of the proposals that were made in the past, before we were in office. The member may know about some of these things. The attempt to buy land west of Morris was stopped by previous administrations because it's not that simple. The problem isn't Morris only. The water comes together at the Morris and Red rivers, obviously, at Morris and that's a huge problem, but the problem is all way down to St. Jean Baptiste. The people say, well, let's build a bridge over the Morris River. That's not going to solve anything if you've got flooding between Morris and St. Jean Baptiste. That's a problem.

That's why people then talked in the '90s about a bypass. Then you've got the same issue of businesses in Morris that would have a bypass around—if it's on the east side it would deal with the 200 and down Letellier bridge. If it's on the west side, it has to deal with the Plum River. Also, every foot you elevate a highway, it's four feet you have to provide as a base, and we certainly are looking at areas we can elevate the highway as part of our capital construction. In fact, some of the parts of that highway now are not underwater that were underwater before because the reconstruction of the highway we're adding a foot of elevation to the highway and having some greater access.

So we're looking at all these options. There's about six options on the table. It looks like the least cost-effective—and I'll just say this to the member opposite—is the bridge only that would go right into Morris. Now in Morris itself, we have a highway capital plan that's been stymied by the sewer system there, but I think we now have an agreement under the new infrastructure—well, I shouldn't speak to that, but we're trying to get one. So that money's in our highways capital and the road in Morris is pretty deplorable. Now the mayor suggested on our trip that we do St. Mary's Road to Albany, Albany down 200—Albany, Albany, Aubigny—A-u, not A-l, Aubigny, St. Jean Baptiste and down 200, but then across to 23, which is open now. I believe that's the road, right? But there are other people that think that that's not going to solve anything because you've got the problem south of Morris to St. Jean and the Plum River bridge as well.

I just raise these as some of—every time—and I know the former government had to look at this, too, because it was 44 days when Morris was closed in 1997. It was 14 days where it was closed in '96, so I know that it's not something that just we had to look at it, everything was fine until 2005. We had a summer event where they had to build a ramp and slowed things down for at least a day and a half. We had 18 days in 2006. It's going to be at least that in 2009, so we had—44 and 14—58 days closed in the last decade. We may have something close to that in this decade.

I would also say, in terms of cost issues, I would like a better solution than what we have now, but if you travel west of here through the mountains, you might get two or three days where a mountain pass is closed down. Here we have a definite—it's definitely not a strength in our transportation system, but it is a 45-minute detour unless you're coming from the west, from Brandon, Saskatchewan or Alberta. If you're coming from the west, you're actually cutting off down to Carman at an earlier point. And then in '97, Highway 29 was closed as well. So we're looking at all of these issues. I'm just presenting you—every time we kick it, this is something comes back—but I do know there was an attempted land acquisition back in the '90s and it got stopped because people thought Morris shouldn't lose that business, but a bypass has to go past St. Jean. It's not a perimeter highway around Morris. People tell me—I haven't made any decision—but people tell me you can't solve it with just one community. So I'm not sure whether you represent St. Jean, too. I don't think

so, so we might have a discussion in your own caucus about this issue, but we haven't got—*[interjection]* What's that? Well, you could have two different positions, I suppose, but—*[interjection]* Invite me? Okay.

\* (16:50)

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Madam Chair, I think that when you look at since 1997, 12 years ago, I know that there has been—and most recently—but the issue now is CentrePort, and CentrePort needs a highway into the province that is going to service that area. Now, I believe that the government does have a plan for the effective use of Highway 75, and I would like to know if they plan to do a bypass around Morris. It sounds to me like the bypass would start at St. Jean and come back around somewhere north of Morris. I wonder if that is the plan that the Premier has. If that is the plan, why isn't he announcing it? Why isn't he making it public?

**Mr. Doer:** Sometimes, when you elevate a road and have a bypass, you actually create flooding in other areas. You might create flooding in Riverside; you might create flooding in Rosenort. So they're looking at all the water flows out of all these proposals. Don't assume it will be on the west side of the river. It might be on the east side of the river. You have options on the east side of the river, Highway 59 right back to Letellier. I'm not saying that that's the only option.

In terms of the Highway 75 and transportation to CentrePort, the first priority we had was twinning the highway to the Saskatchewan border. We also think that Highway 16 and that interchange are deficient. We've got an announcement, and we're working on a design of that. We believe that it's absolutely No. 1 priority for the northwest quadrant adjacent to the airport to have that infrastructure. There is also a bottleneck at Headingley on a 365-day basis, and there's a 365-day challenge in St. Norbert in terms of a bypass around there. Unfortunately, the Perimeter Highway didn't go south of St. Norbert; it went through St. Norbert. Then, of course, there are the 58 days in the 1990s where trucks had a 45-minute detour. They weren't stopped from travelling, a detour.

We have five issues of transportation: twinning, done; Highway 16, in process; No. 1 priority, the Inkster twinning from the airport and rail to the Perimeter Highway with the proper interchange. The interchange will include an option to go with

Headingley. Obviously, Madam Chair, that's an option in Headingley. You go through Headingley—you're going to have the businesses on that section. You represent that section as well, so I'll be interested in your opinion there. I love the Nick's Inn there, Nick's restaurant, but I probably had too many of their burgers over the years.

Then there's the issue of St. Norbert, and then there's the issue of Morris and St. Jean. Each one of these is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. We know all of them eventually will have to be dealt with, and they will be dealt with—but I say eventually.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** I know that, with the CentrePort and with the transportation corridors, yes, all the things that the Premier's announced and that have been completed, I also recognize he's talking about an interchange that goes from the connection at Saskatchewan Avenue and the Perimeter, which is going to go southwest. Probably I think the implication was to hook up somewhere around the White Horse at St. François. That's something that has been spoken about, and been publicly spoken about, as a matter of fact. I know that those are plans are there some time in the future. That would seem to be a secondary one when you're talking about the Highway 75 and not only having it as a major transportation route, but also being able to keep it dry.

When the Premier talks about just a 45-minute delay, it is a delay that is very costly to the trucking industry, as he well knows. I would think there's a plan on the books for an eventual bypass around Headingley. There must be a plan on the books for something around Morris. I think that we just want to know what the plan of this government is. Maybe the Premier could make an announcement, or at least speak with the people in the town, talk to the mayor and tell people what they plan to do about Highway 75 around Morris.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, it won't be around Morris. The water is over the highway from Morris to St. Jean. It's also over the bridge at the Plum River. I know the media goes to—whenever the ring dike is closed in Morris, it is a media issue, and it should be. It is a weakness to have a highway closed, whether it's Highway 29 or Highway 75, for a period of time, but trucks are moving through.

I say that because if you try to go, say, through some of the routes in the mountains, you can sit there for a couple of days and you don't have an access to

a detour, so we have to compete with other routes west of us. Some of them have different challenges.

We can solve our challenges, but we're going to make sure that the solution we have doesn't have an unintended consequence of flooding areas through elevated roads that aren't now presently flooded. Believe me, that's something we have to be sure of. It looks like the one option they looked at would be a 12-foot high bridge into Morris, and that wouldn't solve anything for \$150 million. It wouldn't solve the problem of flooding between Morris and St. Jean, so I just raised the—are we looking at it? I know the former government looked at it. They were starting with land acquisition, and then they got told to stop because there were concerns about business in Morris.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** That was 10 years ago, and I think that, with the development of CentrePort Canada, it makes Highway 75 much more relevant in terms of the transportation corridor. I know that that is a part of the plan, a transportation corridor up from the States to Winnipeg and west, north and east, so I really would like to know if, as the Premier said, it's not going around Morris and it's not going through Morris, then what other route are they looking at specifically to redirect traffic from the busiest border crossing in the province, which would be Emerson? It's the one they put a lot of technology into, recognizing the traffic that goes through there, so that does not seem to be one that would change. So, when the traffic comes up I-29 through the border at Emerson, is there an alternate route, then, that the Premier is suggesting that is going to hook up with the Trans-Canada Highway and, ultimately, with CentrePort?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, as I say, that's why it's so important we develop the access out of CentrePort because whether you go south, east or west, or north, the CentrePort is really inadequate in terms of its infrastructure to get trucks and rail co-existing with airlines that have the area around the airport—a 24-hour airport. It's the No. 1 priority for the transportation system, because it's not just south, which is extremely important, it's west, north and east. So that's why it's the No. 1 priority.

It's not going to be the Premier coming up with the best engineering solution. It's the Infrastructure Department that will be looking—is looking at these issues. They are looking at water flow of different routes. There is the issue of routes and costs and distances, and they are looking at water flows. Water



flows are important because we are talking about elevating some roads to be out of the water; we are also talking about blocking water with the road that's being elevated. So they have to look at that. That's, again, one of the challenges we have.

There's Highway 59. It is 27 feet higher than Highway 75. Having said that, it's further away from coming back to Emerson as some other routes might be, so we're looking at other options.

In 1996, it was lost for 14 days and now—

**Madam Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

**IN SESSION**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

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